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TRACTS

IN

Controversy with Dr. Priestley

UPON THE

HISTORICAL QUESTION

OF

The Belief of the First Ages

IN

OUR LORD's DIVINITY.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED

In the YEARS, 1783, 1784, and 1786.

NOW REVISED AND AUGMENTED WITH

A Large Addition of Notes,

AND

SUPPLEMENTAL DISQUISITIONS,

BY THE AUTHOR,

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID's.

Horsley.

Αγνοιας γȣν μεγα τι μοι δοκω και χαλεπον ἀφωρισμενον ὁρᾳν εἰδος, πασι τοις ἀλλοις αὐτης ἀντιςαθμον μερεσι—Το, μη καλειδοτα τι, δοκειν εἰδεναι· δἰ ȣ̓ κινδυνευει παντα, ὁσα διανοιᾳ σφαλλομεθα, γιγνεσθαι πασι. PLATO in SOPHISTA.

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PREFACE.

A GENERAL view of the Controverſy, between Dr. Prieſtley and the Author of the tracts of which the enſuing Volume is compoſed, may not be unacceptable to ſuch of its readers, who for want of leiſure or of opportunity, or, perhaps, of curioſity to peruſe the pieces on either ſide, as they were firſt ſucceſſively publiſhed in ſeparate Pamphlets, may be ſuppoſed to be as yet unacquainted with the riſe and progreſs, and with the preſent ſtate, of the diſpute.

In the year 1782, *an open and vehement attack was made by Dr. Prieſtley upon the Creeds,*

and the eſtabliſhed diſcipline of every church in Chriſtendom, in a work in two volumes, 8*vo. entitled,* a Hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity. *At the head of theſe, the Author placed both the Catholic doctrine of our Lord's Divinity, and the Arian notion of his præexiſtence in a nature far ſuperior to the human; repreſenting the Socinian doctrine of his meer humanity, as the unanimous faith of the firſt Chriſtians. It ſeemed, that the moſt effectual preſervative, againſt the intended miſchief, would be to deſtroy the writer's credit and the authority of his name; which the fame of certain lucky diſcoveries in the proſecution of phyſical experiments had ſet high in popular eſteem, by proof of his incompetency in every branch of literature connected with his preſent ſubject; of which the work itſelf afforded evident ſpecimens in great abundance. For this declared purpoſe, a review of the imperfections of his work, in the firſt part relating to our Lord's divinity, was made the ſubject of a charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Alban's, the ſpring next following*

following Dr. Prieſtley's publication. The ſpecimens alleged of the imperfections of the work, and the incompetency of its author, may be reduced to ſix general claſſes. Inſtances of reaſoning in a circle; Inſtances of quotations miſapplied, through ignorance of the writer's ſubject; Inſtances of teſtimonies perverted by artful and forced conſtructions; Inſtances of paſſages in the Greek Fathers, miſinterpreted through ignorance of the Greek language; Inſtances of paſſages miſinterpreted, through the ſame ignorance driven further out of the way by an ignorance of the Platonic philoſophy; Inſtances of ignorance of the phraſeology of the earlieſt eccleſiaſtical writers. This diſcourſe was received by the venerable body, to which it was addreſſed, with marks of favour and approbation ever to be remembered by its author with pride and ſatisfaction. At their requeſt, it was given, with conſiderable enlargement, to the public. It is the firſt tract in the preſent collection. The firſt publication of this diſcourſe gave no ſmall alarm to the well-wiſhers and admirers of Dr. Prieſtley's doctrines. Dr.

Prieſtley, however, kept up the ſpirits of his party by promiſing an early and ſatisfactory anſwer.

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipſo
Ducit opes animumque ferro——

was his vaunting language. He predicted that he ſhould riſe more illuſtrious from his ſuppoſed defeat; he promiſed to ſtrengthen the evidence of his favourite opinion, by the very objections that had been raiſed againſt it; he ſeemed to flatter himſelf that he ſhould find a new convert in his antagoniſt himſelf; and his new performance had ſcarce made its appearance, when he had the ridiculous vanity to boaſt, even in print, of the ſhame and remorſe with which he was confident his adverſary muſt be penetrated. A controverſy, that was in the mean while going on, upon the ſame ſubject, between Dr. Prieſtley and the Rev. Mr. Samuel Badcock, the author of a learned critique upon the firſt part of Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſtory, inſerted in the Monthly Review for the month of June 1783, *gave Dr. Prieſtley the occaſion of raiſing theſe expectations in the public. It was*

late

late in the Autumn of the ſame year (1783) when the work, which was to effect theſe wonders, appeared in the form of Letters to Dr. Horſley. *Theſe Letters gave occaſion to the tract, which is the ſecond in this collection, entitled,* Letters from the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, in reply to Dr. Prieſtley, *which was firſt publiſhed in the ſummer of the year* 1784. *Dr. Prieſtley in his Letters, expreſſed a great deſire to draw his adverſary into a tedious controverſy on the main queſtion; the article of our Lord's divinity. His adverſary, knowing that queſtion to have been long ſince exhauſted, and that nothing new was to be ſaid on either ſide, choſe in his* Letters in Reply *to adhere cloſely to* his own *main queſtion. He defended his former argument, and he collected new ſpecimens from Dr. Prieſtley's new publication of his utter inability to throw light upon the ſubject. Thus a uſeleſs and endleſs contention upon the main queſtion was avoided; but many diſcuſſions neceſſarily aroſe upon ſecondary points more or leſs connected with it. The authority of the writings*

that go under the name of the Apoſtolical Fathers —the riſe of the two ſects of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites—the difference between the two— and the difference of both from the orthodox Hebrew Chriſtians—theſe the learned reader will probably eſteem the moſt intereſting parts of the whole controverſy; as on the other hand he will certainly judge the long diſpute, whether the word Jews, *means Jews, on Dr. Prieſtley's part at leaſt, to be the moſt frivolous. In theſe Letters in Reply, Dr. Prieſtley's antagoniſt declared himſelf reſolved to give no anſwer to any thing that Dr. Prieſtley might find to ſay further upon the ſubject. A declaration in which at the time he was much in earneſt.*

Dr. Prieſtley, mortified to find that his Letters had failed of the expected ſucceſs; that his antagoniſt touched with no ſhame, with no remorſe, remained unſhaken in his opinion; and that the authority of his own opinion was ſtill ſet at nought; his learning diſallowed; his ingenuity in argument impeached; and, what was leaſt to be borne,

borne, finding that a haughty churchman ventured incidentally to avow his ſentiments of the Divine commiſſion of the Epiſcopal Miniſtry, and preſumed to queſtion the authority of thoſe teachers, who uſurp the preacher's office without any better warrant, than their own opinion of their own ſufficiency; loſt all temper. A ſecond ſet of Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's *appeared, in the autumn of the year* 1784, *in which all profeſſion of perſonal regard and civility was laid aſide. The charge of inſufficiency in the ſubject was warmly retorted, and the incorrigible dignitary was taxed with manifeſt miſrepreſentation of his adverſary's argument; with injuſtice to the character of Origen, whoſe veracity he had called in queſtion; and with the groſſeſt falſification of antient Hiſtory. He was ſtigmatized in ſhort, in terms, as* a falſifier of hiſtory, and a defamer of the character of the dead.

Under all this reproach, he continued ſilent almoſt eighteen months: the character of Origen, and an intricate queſtion of antient hiſtory, upon which

which the charge of direct falsification had been advanced against him, were indeed the only points on which he felt the least desire to reply. A Sermon on the Incarnation, *preached in his parish church of St. Mary Newington, in Surry, upon the feast of the Nativity, in the year* 1785, *which is the third tract in this collection, was the prelude to a renewal of the contest upon his side; and was followed early in the ensuing spring by his* Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, with Proofs of certain facts asserted by the Archdeacon. *This tract is the fourth in order in this volume. It consists of two parts. The first is a collection of new specimens of Dr. Priestley's temerity in assertion. The second defends the attack upon the character of Origen, and proves the existence of a body of Hebrew Christians at Ælia after the time of Adrian: the fact upon which the author's good faith had been so loudly arraigned. It also contains confirmation of another fact, which had been incidentally mentioned, the decline of Calvinism among our English dissenters,*

diſſenters, and a chapter on the general ſpirit of Dr. Prieſtley's controverſial writings. With this publication, he again promiſed himſelf, that the controverſy on his part would be cloſed. But having at laſt yielded with reluctance to the ſolicitations of his friends, to republiſh theſe four tracts in the preſent form, he hath taken this occaſion to give Dr. Prieſtley's Letters a ſecond peruſal; and to many things which he had before paſſed unnoticed, he hath now replied; partly in notes occaſionally interſperſed in the former tracts, and, where the matter ariſing upon any particular queſtion hath turned out to be more, than could be conveniently compriſed within the compaſs of a note, in Supplemental Diſquiſitions of conſiderable length. The remarks upon Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters produced a third *ſet of* Letters from Dr. Prieſtley *upon the two queſtions of Origen's veracity, and the orthodox Hebrews of the church of Ælia. Theſe too are anſwered; partly in notes interſperſed in the remarks, and partly in the two laſt of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions, which in all, are ſix in number. It is conceived, that nothing*

thing of any conſequence in Dr. Prieſtley's three ſets of Letters now remains unanſwered. The author, indeed, is well aware that Dr. Prieſtley will charge him with one capital omiſſion. That he hath taken no notice of any thing that may be contained, relating to the various points of this controverſy, in Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſtory of Early Opinions concerning Chriſt; *that large work in four volumes, the reſult of a* whole two-years *ſtudy of the writers of antiquity, which, as it hath been publiſhed ſince Dr. Prieſtley's laſt Letters, may be ſuppoſed to contain better arguments, or at leaſt his old arguments in a better form. The only apology to be made, is a ſimple declaration of the truth. Not conceiving himſelf obliged to engage in the inſipid taſk of reading ſo long a book, without better hope of information from it, than his paſt experience of the writer's knowledge in the ſubject gives; Dr. Prieſtley's adverſary is as ignorant of the contents of that work, as he could have been, had it never been publiſhed. It is reported, indeed, that the work, whatever may be its merits, hath a very*

ſlow

ſlow ſale. Of conſequence it hath found but few readers. The antagoniſt of Dr. Prieſtley, were he better acquainted with its contents, would ſtill diſdain to do the office of the midwife for this laborious birth. He would not, by an unneceſſary and unſeaſonable oppoſition to neglected arguments, be the inſtrument of drawing four volumes, fraught, as the very title imports, with pernicious heretical theology, from the obſcurity in which they may innocently rot in the Printer's warehouſe.

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A CHARGE,

A

CHARGE

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF ST. ALBAN's, &c.

A

CHARGE, &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE Buſineſs of the Chriſtian Prieſthood, like that of every ſecular occupation, conſiſting in two branches, the Speculative, and the Practical; if any of us, by a particular bleſſing of Providence attending our temporal fortunes, are releaſed from the neceſſity, to which the greater part ſubmit, of a ſevere and conſtant toil in the practical branch of the profeſſion, as the labour by which they have to earn their daily bread; it ſeems to be our particular duty to conſecrate the leiſure we enjoy, if I may borrow an expreſſion from the profane ſciences, to the Theory of Religion. And in the preſent ſtate of Religious Learning in this country, it ſhould ſeem that the cultivation of that branch of it, which is called Sacred Criticiſm, and particularly the elucidation of the Text of the Old Teſtament, by a diligent uſe of the materials which the unwearied induſtry of a learned Critic, ſupported by the munificence of the beſt of Princes, hath ſupplied, is the ſtudy in which, of all others, our talents and our induſtry might be beſt employed. It is, how-

ever, to be remembered, that the Writings of the Old Teſtament are only of a ſecondary importance; for the evidence which they afford of the truth of our Lord's pretenſions, and for the light which they throw upon the doctrines of the Goſpel; which is indeed ſo great, that an inattention to theſe more ancient parts of the Code of Revelation, is likely to be one principal cauſe of the ſcepticiſm which unhappily prevails among our modern ſectaries, concerning the original dignity of the Redeemer's nature, and the expiatory virtue of his ſufferings. But in whatever degree the Jewiſh Scriptures may be uſeful for the general confirmation of Chriſtianity; it is from their relation to the Goſpel, to which, we have been told by the higheſt authority, the Moſaic diſpenſation was but a prelude or preparative, that they derive the whole of the importance which they yet retain. A profound and critical acquaintance with them is uſeful only as means conducive to an end: and in this, as in other caſes, every ſolid advantage will be loſt, that might be reaped from the improvement of the means, if, in the too aſſiduous purſuit of theſe, we loſe ſight of the end to which they ſhould be made ſubſervient. The Theology of the Chriſtian Revelation is the great object, to which every other branch of ſacred literature is naturally ſubordinate. To extract it from the writings of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, connected with the earlier revelations; to aſſert and defend their genuine doctrine; to preſerve it entire; and to maintain it in its native purity, unadulterated by the additions of ſuperſtition, undebaſed and undiminiſhed by the refinements

finements of philoſophy; this is the great buſineſs to which thoſe of us, who feel themſelves at eaſe and in affluence, and Maſters of the leiſure which affluence affords, ſhould conſider their talents and their ſtudies to be ſolemnly devoted.

2. My Reverend Brethren, I would be underſtood to ſpeak with ſentiments of reſpect, of thoſe whom I ſhall take the liberty to call the labouring part of the parochial Clergy: of thoſe whoſe lives are ſpent in a conſtant attendance on the public ceremonies of external worſhip, or in the charitable and neceſſary buſineſs of inſtructing the people of the lower ranks in the firſt principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt. Of theſe venerable men, of their godly labours, and honourable occupations, I would be underſtood to ſpeak with reverence and reſpect. Of all the departments of the ſacred office, the buſineſs of that which it is their lot to fill, is perhaps the moſt immediately conducive to general edification: and for the zeal and ability with which it is diſcharged by them, they are juſtly entitled to the higheſt degrees of veneration and eſteem. It is matter of concern and grief to every ſerious Chriſtian, that their rewards in this life ſhould but ſeldom correſpond, in any fair proportion, with the worth of their characters, and the importance of their ſervices. Thanks be to Him, of whom the whole family is named, their hope is full of glory. It is felt, I am perſuaded; by themſelves as the heavieſt inconvenience of their preſent ſituation, that their employment, uſeful and honourable as it muſt ever be confeſſed to be,

partakes in ſome degree of the nature of a worldly buſineſs; requiring a labour of the body, and a diſtracting intercourſe with the world, which leave little opportunity for private ſtudy and ſolitary meditation. In circumſtances ſo unfriendly to literary improvement, it redounds highly to their praiſe, that they are ſo eminently well qualified, as they generally approve themſelves to be, to diſcharge the plain duty of Catechiſts, with credit to themſelves, and advantage to the Church of God. To deliver the doctrine of the Goſpel in that plain and general way, which, if it were to meet with no oppoſition from the diſputers of the world, might be ſufficient to give it its full effect upon the heart of the hearer. But occaſions will from time to time ariſe, when the truth muſt be not only taught, but defended. The ſtubborn Infidel will raiſe objections againſt the firſt principles of our faith: and objections muſt be anſwered. The reſtleſs ſpirit of ſcepticiſm will ſuggeſt difficulties in the ſyſtem, and create doubts about the particulars of the Chriſtian doctrine: difficulties muſt be removed, and doubts muſt be ſatisfied. But above all, the ſcruples muſt be compoſed, which the refinements of a falſe philoſophy, patronized as they are in the preſent age by men no leſs amiable for the general purity of their manners, than diſtinguiſhed by their ſcientific attainments, will be too apt to raiſe in the minds of the weaker Brethren. And this is the ſervice to which they, whom the indulgence of Providence hath releaſed from the more laborious offices of the prieſthood, ſtand peculiarly engaged. To them their more occupied Brethren have a right to look up, in

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theſe emergencies, for ſupport and ſuccour in the common cauſe. It is for them to ſtand forth the champions of the common faith, and the advocates of their order. It is for them to wipe off the aſperſions injuriouſly caſt upon the ſons of the eſtabliſhment, as uninformed in the true grounds of the doctrine which they teach, or inſincere in the belief of it. To this duty they are indiſpenſably obliged, by their providential exemption from work of a harder kind. It is the proper buſineſs of the ſtation which is allotted them in Chriſt's houſhold. And deep will be their ſhame, and inſupportable their puniſhment, if, in the great day of reckoning, it ſhould appear, that they have received the wages of a ſervice, which hath never been performed.

3. You will eaſily conjecture, that what has ledde me into theſe reflections, is the extraordinary attempt, which hath been lately made, to unſettle the faith, and to break up the conſtitution of every eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment in Chriſtendom. Such is the avowed object of a recent publication, which bears the title of *A Hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity*; among which the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, in the author's opinion, holds a principal place. With what ſucceſs he hath attacked this fundamental article, and how far he hath been able to invalidate the argument from early and uniform tradition, this Reverend Aſſembly will be competent to judge, from the brief view which ſhall be laid before them, of the account which he attempts to give of the riſe and progreſs of

the doctrine in the three firſt ages, accompanied with ſpecimens of the proofs by which his pretended hiſtory, in this part of it, is ſupported.

I.

1. The opinion which he maintains, is in general the ſame which was firſt, I think, propagated in the laſt century by Daniel Zuicker, a Pruſſian phyſician, of the Socinian perſuaſion; and, upon the authority of that writer, hath been current ever ſince among the Unitarians of this country. *That the doctrine of the Trinity, in the form in which it is now maintained, is of no greater antiquity than the Nicene Council: That it is the reſult of a gradual corruption of the doctrine of the Goſpel, which took its riſe in an opinion firſt advanced in the ſecond century by certain converts from the Platonic School; who, expounding the beginning of St. John's Goſpel by the Platonic Doctrine of the Logos, aſcribed a ſort of ſecondary divinity to our Saviour, affirming that he was no other than the ſecond principle of the Platonic Triad, who had aſſumed a human body to converſe with man: That before this innovation, of which Juſtin Martyr is made the author, the faith of the whole Chriſtian Church, but particularly of the Church of Jeruſalem, was ſimply and ſtrictly Unitarian. The immediate Diſciples of the Apoſtles conceived our Saviour to be a man, whoſe exiſtence commenced in the womb of the Virgin; and they thought him in no reſpect the object of worſhip. The next ſucceeding race worſhipped him indeed, but they had*

had however no higher notions of his Divinity, than thoſe which were maintained by the followers of Arius in the fourth century. In ſhort, the firſt race of Chriſtians, in Dr. Prieſtley's opinion, were Unitarians in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word; the ſecond, Arians*. As Dr. Prieſtley follows Zuicker in theſe extravagant aſſertions, ſo the arguments, by which he would ſupport them, are in all eſſential points the ſame which were alleged to the ſame purpoſe, either by that writer, or by Simon Epiſcopius. Epiſcopius, though himſelf no Socinian, very indiſcreetly concurred with the Socinians of his time, in maintaining, that the opinion of the meer humanity of Chriſt had prevailed very generally in the firſt ages; and was never deemed Heretical by the Fathers of the Orthodox perſuaſion; at leaſt not in ſuch degree, as to exclude from the communion of the Church. The opinion, I believe, had its riſe in no worſe principle than the charitable temper of the man, and his juſt abhorrence of the ſpirit of perſecution, with which Chriſtians of every denomination were in his time much infected: which is indeed itſelf of all hereſies by far the moſt malignant, being the moſt oppoſite to that general Philanthropy, which is the root of all ſocial virtue, and the higheſt ornament of the Chriſtian profeſſion. Epiſcopius wiſhed, as every good man muſt wiſh, to ſee a general toleration eſtabliſhed; which he thought could not be more effectually recommended, than by the example of the

* See this brief ſtatement of Dr. Prieſtley's opinion defended againſt his objections to it, in the 13th of my Letters in Reply.

harmony which ſubſiſted among Chriſtians in the earlieſt ages. The force of his example he would naturally think improved, in proportion as the idea of the harmony was heightened; the idea of the harmony heightened, as the controverſies of the firſt Chriſtians were magnified and multiplied. Theſe ſentiments inclined him to credit as hiſtorians, the ſame writers whom, as Divines, he held in little eſtimation. He gave eaſy credit to Unitarian writers, when they repreſented the differences of opinion in the early churches, as much greater than ever really obtained; and the tenderneſs for ſectaries, as more than was ever practiſed; and while he oppoſed their doctrine, he vouched their ſtory. The purpoſes of Charity had been better ſerved, without injury to the cauſe of truth, had the talents of this able writer been employed to ſet the doctrine of Univerſal Toleration on its only firm and proper baſis: to ſhew, that although in dubious points of doctrine, the judgment of antiquity, wherever it is clear, muſt be allowed to be deciſive; yet the juſt ſeverity of the Primitive Church towards the refractory Heretics, whoſe viſionary doctrines, joined with their contempt of apoſtolic authority, diſgraced the riſing community, and obſtructed the propagation of the truth, conſtitutes no example for the controul of fair enquiry, or for the puniſhment of meer ſpeculative hereſy in theſe later times; by any harſher means than the neceſſary excluſion of Diſſenters from the honours and emoluments of national eſtabliſhments. Had the opinion which he choſe to adopt been true, Simon Epiſcopius, with his ſcanty knowledge of eccleſiaſtical antiquities,

antiquities, was but ill qualified to maintain it. Falſe and groundleſs as it was, his natural acuteneſs enabled him to furniſh the Socinians of his time, whoſe cauſe in the doctrinal part he little thought to ſerve, with the beſt arguments that have ever been produced on the Unitarian ſide of the queſtion. Our modern Hiſtorian, in ſupport of his imaginary progreſs of opinions from the Unitarian Doctrine to the Nicene Faith, hath produced few, if any, arguments which make directly for his purpoſe, but what are to be found in the writings either of Zuicker or Epiſcopius. Nor is a ſingle argument to be found in the writings either of Zuicker or Epiſcopius, which is not unanſwerably confuted by our learned Dr. George Bull, afterwards Lord Biſhop of St. David's, in three celebrated treatiſes, which deſerve the particular attention of every one, who would take upon him to be either a teacher or an hiſtorian of the Chriſtian Faith: the firſt, *A Defence of the Nicene Faith*; the ſecond, *The Judgment of the Catholic Church, in the firſt ages, concerning the neceſſity of believing that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is very God*; the third, *The Primitive and Apoſtolical Tradition concerning the true Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt.*

2. It ſeems very extraordinary, that any one ſhould preſume to revive the defeated arguments of Zuicker and Epiſcopius, without attempting to make them good againſt the objections of a writer of Dr. Bull's eminence. Nor is it eaſy to conceive, what apology can be made, for what ſhould ſeem ſo groſs an inſult on the learning and diſcernment of the age; unleſs it be,

be, that Dr. Prieſtley imagines, that although he hath abſtained from a particular diſcuſſion of Dr. Bull's arguments, he hath in effect anſwered them, by the new light which he perſuades himſelf he has thrown upon the ſubject: That by the evidence which he thinks he hath brought of the truth of his own narrative, in every branch of it, he ſuppoſes that he hath virtually replied to all objections: That he hath confirmed the aſſumptions from which Zuicker and Epiſcopius reaſoned, which Dr. Bull pretended to deny: and that, by confirming their aſſumptions, he hath made good their arguments, although he may have taken no notice of their learned antagoniſt. What new illuſtrations the ſubject hath received from Dr. Prieſtley's labours, will beſt appear from ſpecimens of the arguments by which he would ſupport his three principal aſſumptions: namely, that the firſt Chriſtians were Unitarians in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word; that the Deity of Chriſt was firſt taught by a Platonizing ſect; and that the doctrine, which they introduced, was the very ſame, for which, in a later age, Arius was condemned. If his proof of theſe fundamental propoſitions ſhould be found to reſt upon precarious aſſumptions, perverted hiſtory, miſconſtrued and miſapplied quotations: if his facts ſhould appear to be confuted by his own authorities, and his concluſions to be defeated by his own arguments: if the reſemblance between the Chriſtian and the Platonic Trinity ſhould appear to be no mark of corruption in the prevailing opinions: the Catholic Faith, which hath heretofore ſuſtained ſo many rude aſſaults, will hardly find its mortal

mortal wound in the ſtroke which Dr. Prieſtley imagines he hath inflicted.

3. The firſt argument which is produced in ſupport of the firſt aſſertion, "that the faith of the firſt Chriſtians was ſimply Unitarian," is built upon an aſſumption, which, could it be proved to be true, would indeed render the concluſion obvious and inevitable. "That the doctrine of our Lord's meer humanity is "the clear doctrine of the Scriptures, and that the "Apoſtles never taught any other*." It will eaſily be granted, that the Apoſtles never taught the contrary of any doctrine that is clearly delivered in their writings; and that the Faith of the firſt Converts was a belief of neither more nor leſs, than the Apoſtles taught. So that the ſenſe of the Scriptures in any article being once clearly aſcertained, the argument from the clear confeſſed ſenſe of Scripture to the preaching of the Apoſtles, and from the preaching of the Apoſtles to the Primitive Faith, will be firm and valid. But the profeſſed object of our learned adverſary's undertaking, requires an argument, that ſhould go the contrary way: from the Primitive Faith to the ſenſe of the Scriptures. It is the profeſſed object of his undertaking, to exhibit a view of the gradual changes of opinions, in order to aſcertain the faith of the firſt ages: and he would aſcertain the faith of the firſt ages, in order to ſettle the ſenſe of the Scriptures in diſputed points. He is therefore not at liberty, to aſſume any

* Hiſtory of Corruptions, vol. I. p. 6.

ſenſe

ſenſe of the Scriptures, which, becauſe it is his own, he may be pleaſed to call the clear ſenſe, for a proof that the Original Faith was ſuch, as would confirm the ſenſe he wiſhes to eſtabliſh. His ſenſe of the Scriptures being not acknowledged by the majority of the Chriſtian Church, whatever may be his own judgment of its clearneſs, it can only paſs for a particular interpretation. When this particular interpretation is alleged, in proof that the Original Faith of the Church of Jeruſalem was ſuch as might juſtify that interpretation; the middle term of the argument is no otherwiſe confirmed than by an aſſumption of the principal matter in debate: and ſo long as the ſixth page of the firſt volume of Dr. Prieſtley's hiſtory ſhall be extant, the maſters of the dialectic art will be at no loſs for an example of the circulating ſyllogiſm. To Dr. Prieſtley it may be very clear, that when St. John, ſpeaking of the Logos, of which he had already affirmed that it it was in the beginning, ſays, "This perſon" (for that is the natural force of the Greek pronoun ὁυτος*) "This perſon was in the beginning with God; all "things were made by him, and without him was "not any thing made that was made:" it may be very clear to Dr. Prieſtley, that St. John, ſpeaking of the Logos, as of a perſon who had been from the beginning, and had done theſe great things, means to affirm that the Logos is no perſon; nor is, otherwiſe than in a figurative ſenſe, to be called an agent in any buſineſs: that he means to contradict thoſe, who held

* See the third of my Letters in reply, and the Appendix to the Letters, No. 2.

that

that the Logos was any thing more than an attribute of the Divine Mind; to ſilence them; to extinguiſh their profane innovation by his definitive ſentence upon the queſtion: and that when he ſpeaks of eternity as belonging to the Logos as a perſon, it is, that this was the moſt explicit way, in which he could give the Chriſtian Church to underſtand, that eternity is only accidental to the Logos, the ſubſtance to which it properly belongs, being that Mind of which the Logos itſelf is only another attribute*. It may be very clear to Dr. Prieſtley's apprehenſion, that when St. Paul affirms of Chriſt, that he is the "image of the inviſi- "ble God, the firſt born of every creature, by whom "all things were created," and explains in what extent the words "all things" are to be underſtood, by an enumeration of the conſtituent parts, and governing powers of the Univerſe; "things in heaven and things in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt†;" it may be very clear to Dr. Prieſtley, that St. Paul in theſe expreſſions would be underſtood to aſſert, that Chriſt was nothing more than a man, and was no otherwiſe the creator of any thing, than as he was the founder of the Chriſtian Church. All this may be very clear to Dr. Prieſtley's apprehenſion; and equal to the clearneſs of the apprehenſion, which he imagines he enjoys, that this was the doctrine of the Apoſtles, will be the

* See Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 10, 12.

† Coloſſ. i. 15, 17.

confidence

confidence of his perſuaſion, that it was alſo the faith of their firſt converts. But to others, who have not the ſagacity to diſcern, that the true meaning of an inſpired writer muſt be the reverſe of the natural and obvious ſenſe of the expreſſions which he employs; the force of the concluſion, that the Primitive Chriſtians could not believe our Lord to be more than a meer man, becauſe the Apoſtles had told them he was the Creator of the Univerſe, will be little underſtood.

4. Another argument is built upon a pretended ſilence of St. John, about the error of thoſe who maintained the meer humanity of Chriſt*, in his firſt epiſtle: in which he is ſuppoſed to cenſure thoſe, who believed Chriſt to be a man only in appearance, in the ſevereſt manner; but upon thoſe who believed him to be nothing more than man, the Apoſtle, as he is underſtood by Dr. Prieſtley, paſſes no cenſure. From which it is to be concluded, that the latter opinion is no error, but the very truth of the Goſpel.

5. But here the queſtion is, whether the opinion of Chriſt's meer humanity is really paſſed over by St. John, as Dr. Prieſtley ſuppoſes, uncenſured and unnoticed. This queſtion will be differently reſolved, according as different interpretations of the Apoſtle's expreſſions are adopted. This argument, therefore, is of the ſame complexion with the former, and labours under the ſame defect. A particular ſenſe of the epiſ-

* Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. I. p. 10 & 13, and vol. II. p. 485.

tle

tle is alleged, in proof of a pretended fact; which fact muſt itſelf ſupport the interpretation. "Every ſpirit," ſays St. John, "which confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is "come in the fleſh, is of God*." "That is," ſays Dr. Prieſtley, "every ſpirit is of God, that confeſſes "that Jeſus Chriſt is truly a man†." But it ſhould ſeem, that the propoſition that he was truly a man, if he was nothing more than man, is very aukwardly and unnaturally expreſſed by the phraſe of his "coming in the fleſh:" for in what other way was it poſſible for a meer man to come? The turn of the expreſſion ſeems to lead to the notion of a Being, who had his choice of different ways of coming: a notion which is implied in other paſſages of holy writ, and is explicitly expreſſed in a book little inferior in authority to the canonical writings; in the firſt epiſtle of Clemens Romanus; in a paſſage of that epiſtle which Dr. Prieſtley, ſomewhat unfortunately for his cauſe, hath choſen for the baſis of an argument of that holy father's heterodoxy. "The ſceptre of the majeſty of God," ſays Clemens, "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, came not in the "pomp of pride and arrogance, *although he had it in* "*his power*‡." Clemens, it ſeems, conceived, that the manner of coming was in the power and choice of the perſon who was to come. St. John's expreſſions evidently lead to the ſame notion. It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that St. John's aſſertions, concerning the ſpirits that maintain or deny that Jeſus is come in the

* 1 John iv. 2.

† Hiſt. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 10. ‡ Chap. xvi.

fleſh;

fleſh; that the one are of God, and the other of Anti-Chriſt; were levelled not ſingly at the hereſy of the *Docetæ*, as Dr. Prieſtley imagines, but equally at that and at another branch of the Gnoſtic hereſy, which divided Jeſus Chriſt into two perſons: Jeſus, who was ſuppoſed to be a meer man, the ſon of Mary by her huſband Joſeph; and the Chriſt, a divine being, who was conſidered as the genius, or tutelary angel, of the man; not however ſo united with the man, as to conſtitute one perſon, or to partake of the man's ſufferings. The firſt epiſtle of St. John aſſerts the doctrine of a true and proper incarnation, in oppoſition to the extravagancies of both theſe ſects. The Apoſtle makes the acknowledgment of the incarnation, in which both an antecedent divinity and an aſſumed humanity are implied, the criterion by which the true teachers are to be diſtinguiſhed from the falſe. And in the poſitive aſſertion of the incarnation, and the expreſs cenſure of the oppoſite doctrine as Anti-chriſtian, he reprobates the notion of Chriſt's meer humanity in the only ſenſe, in which we have any certain evidence that he lived to ſee it maintained. It appears, therefore, that to confeſs that "Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*," and to affirm that Jeſus Chriſt is truly a man, are propoſitions not perfectly equivalent. Dr. Prieſtley indeed hath ſhewn himſelf very ſenſible of the difference. He would not otherwiſe have found it neceſſary, for the improvement of his argument, in reciting the third verſe of the fourth chapter of St. John's Firſt Epiſtle,

* 1 John iv. 2. Ιησεν Χριστον ἐν σαρκι ἐληλυθότα.

to

to change the expreſſions which he found in the public tranſlation, for others which correſpond far leſs exactly with the Greek text. For the words "Jeſus Chriſt is come IN the fleſh," Dr. Prieſtley ſubſtitutes theſe. "Jeſus Chriſt is come OF the fleſh*." That he is come IN the fleſh, and that he is come OF the fleſh, are two very diſtinct propoſitions. The one affirms an incarnation; the other a mortal extraction. The firſt is St. John's aſſertion: the ſecond is Dr. Prieſtley's. Perhaps Dr. Prieſtley hath diſcovered of St. John as of St. Paul, that his reaſoning is ſometimes inconcluſive †, and his language inaccurate: and he might think it no unwarrantable liberty to correct an expreſſion, which, as not perfectly correſponding with his own ſyſtem, he could not entirely approve. It would have been but fair to adverti ſe his readers of ſo capital an emendation. An emendation for which no ſupport is to be found in the Greek text, nor even in the varieties of any MSS. We are informed indeed by Socrates the hiſtorian ‡, (and his teſtimony is confirmed by the Latin of the vulgate) of a very conſiderable variety of ſome of the antient MSS. But it is ſuch as only ſerves to prove, that the principal object of this epiſtle of St. John was underſtood in the Primitive Church, to be the confutation of the Cerinthian Gnoſtics; the ſect which di-

* Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. I. p. 10. lin. 15.

† "——— I think I have ſhewn that the apoſtle Paul "often reaſons inconcluſively." Dr. P. Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. II. p. 370.

‡ Lib. 7. c. 32.

vided Chriſt into two perſons, of which they made Jeſus a meer man; differing in this eſſentially from the *Docetæ*, who made the body of the man Jeſus a meer phantom.

6. And this view of St. John's epiſtle receives a further confirmation from the genuine epiſtles of Ignatius. In theſe the errror of the *Docetæ*, which Dr. Prieſtley ſuppoſes to be the ſole object of St. John's Epiſtle, is indeed particularly cenſured. But leſt, in aſſerting the truth of our Lord's Humanity, he ſhould be underſtood to ſupport the opinion of his meer humanity; the holy Father hardly ever mentions Chriſt, without introducing ſome explicit aſſertion of his Divinity, or without joining with the name of Chriſt ſome epithet in which it is implied.

7. The mention of Ignatius having occurred, it were unpardonable not to ſuggeſt to the recollection of this learned aſſembly, one paſſage in particular in the epiſtle to the Magneſians, in which the eternal exiſtence of the Word, as a diſtinct perſon from the Father, is aſſerted in terms, which, though highly figurative, are perfectly unequivocal. "There is one "God who hath manifeſted himſelf through Jeſus "Chriſt his Son, who is his eternal Word, who "came not forth from ſilence*." The name of the

* Εις θεος εστιν ὁ φανερωσας ἑαυτον δια Ιησυ Χριστυ τυ υἱυ αὐτυ, ὁς ἐστιν αὐτυ λογος ἀϊδιος, ὐκ ἀπο σιγης προελθων. Ign. ad Magn. §. 8.

Logos

Logos led the early fathers to conceive the generation of the Son as an utterance; or at leaſt to ſpeak of it under that figure: as on the contrary the heretics who denied the eternity of the Son, deſcribed the period preceding his generation as a time of ſilence *. Under that figure Ignatius ſpeaks of the generation of the Son in this paſſage: and he affirms, that no period of ſilence had preceded the utterance of the eternal Word. Or if it ſhould ſeem more reaſonable to ſuppoſe an alluſion, in theſe expreſſions of Ignatius, to the *Sige* of the Gnoſtics, the conſort of their *Buthos*, upon whom the Æons were engendered; and to underſtand the holy Father as maintaining the immediate connection of the Father and the Son, unbroken by the intervention of any ſuch intermediate intelligences, as the impious Theogony of the Gnoſtics interpoſed; ſtill the Eternity of the Son is aſſerted. For the paſſage, in this view of it, amounts to this disjunctive propoſition; "The Son's exiſtence holds not of the Father's by "any ſuch remote relation as theſe fabulous genealo-"gies deſcribe; but he is the eternal Logos of the Pa-"ternal Mind." According to either interpretation, the paſſage contains an evident aſſertion of the Divinity of the Son of God. And this aſſertion being found in the writings of Ignatius, the familiar friend and companion of the Apoſtles, who ſuffered martyrdom ſo early as in the ſixteenth year of the ſecond

* So Marcellus of Ancyra; — Προ γαρ της δημιυργιας ἀπασης, ἡσυχια τις ἡν, ὡς εἰκος, ἐν τῳ Θεῳ τὸ Λογὸ ὀντος. Euſeb. contra Marcell. p. 39.

century, and had been appointed to the biſhopric of Antioch full thirty years before, it is an unanſwerable confutation of our author's confident aſſertions, that "we find nothing like Divinity aſcribed to Jeſus "Chriſt before Juſtin Martyr*," and "That all the "early fathers ſpeak of Chriſt as not having exiſted "always†."

8. We have ſeen the ſort and faſhion of the argument which, in proof of his firſt aſſertion, Dr. Prieſtley builds on Holy Writ. Let us take a view of thoſe which he hath drawn from other writers.

9. One principal argument, "that the primitive church of Jeruſalem was properly Unitarian," maintaining the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, is this:— "Athanaſius himſelf was ſo far from denying it, ſays, "Dr. Prieſtley, that he endeavours to account for "it; by ſaying, *that all the Jews were ſo firmly per-* "*ſuaded that their Meſſiah was to be nothing more* "*than a man like themſelves, that the Apoſtles were* "*obliged to uſe great caution in divulging the doctrine* "*of the proper Divinity of Chriſt*‡." The latter clauſe of the ſentence, which contains what Athanaſius is ſuppoſed to have ſaid, is marked with inverted commas; which ſhould ſeem to intimate, that it is an exact tranſlation of ſome paſſage in the holy fa-

* Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. I. p. 32.
† Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. I. p. 42.
‡ Hiſt. Corrup. vol. I. p. 12.

ther's

ther's writings: and the lower margin of Dr. Prieſtley's book refers to Athanaſius's celebrated piece on the orthodoxy of his predeceſſor Dionyſius. Now in this piece upon the orthodoxy of Dionyſius, Athanaſius no where, I confeſs, denies that the primitive church of Jeruſalem was Unitarian. Nor on the other hand do I recollect, that Dr. Prieſtley hath aſſerted it, in any part of his Hiſtory of Electricity. The truth is, that in either of theſe valuable works, the faith of the primitive church of Jeruſalem never comes in queſtion. In the defence of Dionyſius not a ſingle paſſage is to be found, which may be fairly underſtood as a tacit confeſſion, that the primitive faith of the church of Jeruſalem was Unitarian: much leſs is there any attempt to account for its ſuppoſed heterodoxy. Athanaſius ſays indeed of the Jews of the apoſtolic age, that is, of the unbelieving Jews (for Athanaſius is a writer who calls things by their names, and when he ſpeaks of Jews, means not, as Dr. Prieſtley would perſuade us*, Jewiſh Chriſtians, except when he ſarcaſtically gives the Arians the name of Jews as reſembling the Jews, in his judgment, in an obſtinate denial of the Lord who bought them; but otherwiſe when he ſpeaks his uſual, plain, unfigured language, the unconverted Jews of the apoſtolic age are they, of whom he ſays) that they had ſo little inſight into the true meaning of the prophecies, as to look for nothing more than a MAN in the promiſed Meſſiah. He ſays, that this error of the Jews

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. II. p. 486.

had been the means of ſpreading the like miſtake among the Gentiles; meaning probably the Proſelytes of the Gate; who, acknowledging in ſome degree the divinity of the Jewiſh ſcriptures, looked for the completion of the prophecies, and were the firſt Gentiles to whom the preaching of the Apoſtles was addreſſed. Theſe Gentiles, with ſomething of the Jewiſh faith, it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, had imbibed many of the Jewiſh errors; and among others, as Athanaſius imagines, the expectation of a Meſſiah of mortal extraction. This general miſtake, he ſays, made it neceſſary, that the Apoſtles, in their firſt public ſermons, ſhould inſiſt largely on the miracles of our Saviour's life on earth, before they entered into a detail of the particulars of the Goſpel doctrine, or explained what ſort of perſon the promiſed Meſſiah was to be, and Jeſus was. For their doctrine upon that article was not likely to meet with credit, till their divine commiſſion to teach it was acknowledged, and their Maſter's general claim to the character of the Meſſiah, whatever that might be, previouſly admitted. The example of the Apoſtles' practice in this particular is alleged, to ſhew what prudence requires of every preacher of the goſpel; who muſt allow himſelf to be determined in the arrangement of his matter, the choice of his topics, and the compoſition of his language, by the degree of previous knowledge, and the ſtate of opinions, which may actually obtain, among thoſe to whom his inſtructions are addreſſed. What the ignorant will

moſt

moſt eaſily apprehend muſt be firſt taught: thoſe points, which are ſuppoſed to be moſt generally miſunderſtood, muſt be moſt particularly explained: and the truth muſt be conveyed in that language, which may the moſt evidently ſhew its diſagreement with any falſe opinions, to which the hearer may be particularly addicted. Athanaſius contends, that upon theſe principles Dionyſius was to be juſtified, if he dwelt more on the topic of our Lord's Humiliation, than on that of his Divinity; the Sabellian hereſy being the error with which Dionyſius was engaged. The conſideration that the Son became man, afforded the moſt obvious proof that he was not the Father: and the Sabellians were to be convinced that the Word was made fleſh, groſs, corruptible fleſh, before they could be brought to acknowledge that he was God of God. Athanaſius ſhews, that, in the controverſy with theſe Heretics, Dionyſius was inevitably ledde to the uſe of expreſſions, which the Arian party interpreted in their own favour; though Dionyſius always diſclaimed the ſenſe, to which his words were wreſted. He contends, that to tax Dionyſius with a propenſity to the Arian party, on account of theſe expreſſions, were no leſs unreaſonable and injurious, than it would be to entertain the like ſuſpicion of the Apoſtles themſelves; becauſe they had found it neceſſary to perſuade the Jews, that Jeſus had been approved of God by ſigns and wonders as a man, before they could hope to perſuade them, that he was ſo much more than man, that his being found

in faſhion as a man, was really the moſt extraordinary part of his hiſtory and character. It is in no other way than this, that Athanaſius ſpeaks of the Apoſtles as teaching the Jews the humanity of Chriſt. The holy Father never ſpeaks of any caution which they uſed in divulging the doctrine of his full divinity; unleſs an hiſtorian's diſtribution of the matter of his narrative, or a maſter's accommodation of his leſſons to the previous attainments of his pupils, is to be called a caution of divulging, what, in the natural order of tradition, is to be the laſt diſcloſed. Was it ever ſaid of Livy, that he relates the tragedy of Lucretia's death, from a caution of divulging the expulſion of the Tarquins? Of Porphyry, that he treats of the five words, from a caution of divulging the doctrine of the Categories? The beginning of every ſtory muſt be firſt told. The eaſieſt part of every ſcience muſt be firſt taught. Of the great ability and judgment, with which the Apoſtles conducted the firſt preaching of the Goſpel; of their happy art in the perſpicuous arrangement of their lofty argument; with what readineſs they led their Catechumens on, from the ſimpleſt principles to the higheſt myſteries; of this conſummate ability of the Apoſtles in the capacity of teachers, Athanaſius ſpeaks with due commendation. Their caution he never mentions. On the contrary, the rapid progreſs of their inſtruction, how they paſſed at once from the detail of our Lord's life on earth, to the myſtery of his Godhead, is one principal branch of his encomium. I wiſh that Dr. Prieſtly

Prieſtley had produced the paſſage, in which he thinks the Apoſtles are taxed with caution, and of which he certainly imagines (he would not otherwiſe have ledde his reader to imagine) he hath given an exact tranſlation*.

10. NEARLY allied to this argument from Athanaſius's omiſſion to *deny*, is another from Epiphanius's omiſſion to *aſſert*. "Epiphanius in his ac- "count of the Nazarenes—makes no mention of any "of them believing the Divinity of Chriſt in any "ſenſe of the word†." It is granted. Epiphanius, in his account of theſe ancient heretics‡, makes indeed no mention, that they believed the Divinity of Chriſt in any ſenſe of the word. But what is this *no-mention* which Epiphanius makes, and of what importance is it to our author's ſyſtem? It is only that Epiphanius confeſſes, that he had no certain information, what the opinion of the Nazarenes might be upon this article. He had deſcribed them in general as a ſect half Jew and half Chriſtian: not Jews, becauſe they had ſomething of a belief in Chriſt: not Chriſtians, becauſe they lived in bondage to the ri-

* See the paſſage produced and critically examined in the Fourth of Dr. Prieſtley's Firſt Letters to me, the Eleventh of my Letters in reply, and the Tenth of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, and in my Remarks upon Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, Part II. Chap. 1. §. 11.

† Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 8,

‡ Hæreſ. 29.

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tual law. "But concerning Chriſt," he ſays, "I "cannot ſay whether they think him a meer man; "or affirm, as the truth is, that he was begotten of "Mary by the Holy Ghoſt*." It is thus, and thus only, that Epiphanius *makes no mention* of the belief of the Nazarenes in Chriſt's Divinity. But he equally makes no mention of their diſbelief. And had it been Dr. Prieſtley's point to prove, that the Nazarenes held the Nicene Faith upon the ſubject of the Trinity, he might have alleged, with equal fairneſs and propriety, Epiphanius's no-mention of their heterodoxy.

11. Indeed that they were believers in our Lord's Divinity were the fairer concluſion from the neutrality of Epiphanius's evidence. It was little the temper of the age in which Epiphanius lived, it was little the temper of Epiphanius, to think or to ſpeak favourably of thoſe who were deemed heretics. It was rather the practice to aggravate and to multiply their errors, and to vilify their characters: to charge them upon the ſlighteſt grounds with every enormity both in faith and practice. It is very unlikely that Epiphanius would have been ſo tender of the reputation of theſe Nazarenes, as to confeſs his want of

* Περι Χριςȣ δε, ȣ̓κ οἰδα εἰπειν, εἰ καὶ ἀυτοι τῃ τῶν προειρημενων περι Κηρινθον καὶ Μηρινθον μοχθηριᾳ ἀχθεντες, ψιλον ἀνθρωπον νομιζȣσιν· ἡ, καθως ἡ ἀληθεια ἐχει, δια πνευματος ἁγιȣ γεγεννησθαι ἐκ Μαριας διαβεβαιȣνται.

information

information about their opinions of the nature of Chriſt, had there been the leaſt ground to ſuſpect, or had there been ſo much as a ſuſpicion current in his times, although it had been founded only on a general bad opinion of the ſect, that they were heretical in this article. A general clamour, or the bare aſſertion of an earlier writer, would have fixed the imputation, without any nice enquiry into the evidence, by which the charge might be ſupported. And ſince Epiphanius confeſſes, that he had no ground to ſay, that theſe Nazarenes held Chriſt to be a meer man; the preſumption is, that he ought to have ſaid, that they affirmed, as the truth is, that he was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghoſt. But to affirm, as the truth is, that he was begotten of Mary by the Holy Ghoſt, in Epiphanius's ſenſe of thoſe words, was a full confeſſion of his divinity. So that if the opinions of theſe Nazarenes be of any importance for aſcertaining the primitive faith; and conjectures are to be drawn, concerning their opinions, from Epiphanius's profeſſion of his want of information; the fair conjecture is the oppoſite of Dr. Prieſtley's; namely, that the Nazarenes homologated with the church; with the church, as its opinions ſtood in the age of Epiphanius, when I ſuppoſe he will allow it to have been far gone from the primitive purity of his Unitarian faith; with this corrupt church, as Dr. Prieſtley deems it, his friends the Nazarenes homologated upon the article of Chriſt's Divinity.

12. But

12. But after all, of what importance is the opinion of theſe Nazarenes? Or how may the catholic tradition be affected by the ſingularities of a ſect? Of a ſect which lay under the cenſure of the church as heretical? Attend, my Reverend Brethren. It is in this that we have been ſo long, I believe I ought to add, ſo fatally miſtaken. The Nazarenes were never cenſured! They were no ſectaries! They were the very firſt, and becauſe the firſt, they were the pureſt, the very beſt of Chriſtians! Nazarene was the ancient name of the Jewiſh Chriſtians * ! Of the firſt members of the primitive church of Jeruſalem, that original, parent church, the mother of us all; where James the brother of our Lord was biſhop! In the opinions therefore of theſe Nazarenes, we have the opinions of thoſe firſt Chriſtians, who received, not only the baptiſmal ablution, but the illumination of the ſpirit at the hands of the Apoſtles! You ſeem to aſk me, by what evidence this important diſcovery is confirmed? By no evidence. The thing is not proved. It is aſſerted. In philoſophical ſubjects Dr. Prieſtley would be the laſt to reaſon from principles aſſumed without proof. But in divinity and eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, he expects that his own aſſertion, or that of writers of his own perſuaſion, however uninformed or prejudiced, ſhould paſs with the whole Chriſtian world for proof of the boldeſt aſſumptions. The Nazarenes, it is confeſſed, were

* —— the Nazarenes (and the Jewiſh Chriſtians never went by any other name.) Hiſt. Corrup. vol. I. p. 8.

the

the progeny of the firſt Chriſtians of the church of Jeruſalem. But the name of Nazarene, you will bear me witneſs, was never heard of in the Chriſtian church, as deſcriptive of the Jewiſh Chriſtians, before their ſettlement in the northern parts of Galilee, upon the baniſhment of the Jews from Jeruſalem, in the reign of Adrian *. *The Hebrews*, and *they of the circumciſion*, were the earlier names, by which the Jewiſh converts, who formed the church of Jeruſalem, had been diſtinguiſhed from the Chriſtians of the Gentiles. Their deſcendants, the Nazarenes, were at firſt perhaps heretical but in a ſingle article; in maintaining the neceſſity of the obſervance of the Moſaic law for the attainment of Salvation under the goſpel: whereas their anceſtors, had indeed themſelves adhered to their old law, but had declared againſt the abſurdity of exacting a ſubmiſſion to the ceremonial part of it from the Gentile converts. By degrees, however, theſe Nazarenes declined ſo far from the pure faith of that firſt race of Chriſtians, from which they boaſted their deſcent; that in Jerom's time they were become heretical in that degree, that Jerom conſidered them as a Jewiſh ſect rather than a Chriſtian. "To this day," ſays Jerom, "a hereſy prevails among the Jews in all the "ſynagogues of the eaſt, which is called that of the "Minæi, who commonly go by the name of Naza-

* See the laſt paragraph of the ſixth of my *Letters in reply*, and the ſeventh of thoſe Letters. §. 5.

"renes

" renes: who believe in Chriſt, the Son of God
" born of the Virgin; and ſay that he was the per-
" ſon who ſuffered under Pontius Pilate, and roſe
" again; in whom we ourſelves believe. But from
" a deſire of being Jews and Chriſtians both at once,
" they are neither Jews nor Chriſtians *."

13. It is rather for the ſake of general truth, than for the attainment of victory in the preſent argument, that I am deſirous to maintain the diſtinction which was ever made, till Zuicker attempted to confound it, between the primitive church of Jeruſalem, and the ſect of the Nazarenes, its heretical offſpring. In the trinitarian controverſy the diſtinction is of little importance. Or rather it would be of advantage to the argument of the orthodox party, if our faith needed other ſupport, than that which the plain ſenſe of the ſcriptures and the whole tenor of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſupply; it would be of ſingular advantage to our argument, that Dr. Prieſtley ſhould be able to to eſtabliſh Zuicker's extravagant poſition, that theſe Nazarenes were no other than the original members of the Hebrew church. Whoever they were, their orthodoxy, in the article of our Lord's Divinity, is notorious. It is atteſted by moſt of the writers of antiquity that mention them. It is acknowledged by Jerom, at the very ſame time that he taxes them

* Epiſt. ad Auguſtinum de diſſidio Petri et Pauli, Tom. III. fol. 155. B. edit. Froben.

with

with the groſſeſt hereſy in other points. And were no expreſs teſtimony to be produced, ſtill it would be the fair and probable concluſion, from that very paſſage of Epiphanius, upon which Dr. Prieſtley would build the contrary opinion. If therefore it could be proved, that theſe Nazarenes really were, what Dr. Prieſtley hath been taught by Zuicker to believe, the firſt converts of the circumciſion; we who maintain the full Divinity of Chriſt, ſhould find, in the confeſſion of the Nazarenes, the verdict of thoſe firſt Chriſtians in our favour. But ſince the fact is, that they were an heretical ſect, which aroſe in the ſecond century from the aſhes of the church of Jeruſalem*: their opinions upon any article are totally inſignificant, and can in no way affect the catholic tradition. Still therefore the modern Unitarian would ſerve his own cauſe but ill, who ſhould be able to ſucceed in the attempt to prove, that the meer humanity of Chriſt was a tenet of the Nazarenes.

14. The neutrality of Epiphanius's evidence is however not the whole of the proof, by which our modern hiſtorian hath taken the pains to ſupport an aſſertion ſo little to his purpoſe. It is alleged only to corroborate a more direct proof, which is very proper to be produced as another ſpecimen of the ſort of argument upon which our author's firſt propoſition reſts.

* See Letters in Reply, VI. and VII.

15. The

15. THE Nazarenes, and the Ebionites, he tells us, were the ſame people, and held the ſame tenets*. By the appellation of Ebionites it is confeſſed a certain ſect, which denied the Divinity of our Saviour, was originally diſtinguiſhed. But how is it proved, that theſe Ebionites were the ſame with the Nazarenes? By a pretended acknowledgement of Origen and Epiphanius †. It is of great importance for a juſt apprehenſion of the exact force of any writer's arguments, to catch the idioms of his ſtile: and an attention to this circumſtance muſt be particularly recommended to Dr. Prieſtley's readers. One of the moſt ſtriking peculiarities of his language, is a very ſingular uſe of the words *acknowledge*, and *acknowledgment*. Acknowledgment, in the uſual acceptation of the word in controverſial writing, ſignifies a writer's avowal of a principle or a fact, which, as making for his adverſary's argument, it might have been for his purpoſe to conceal or to deny, but that the evidence of the thing extorted the confeſſion. But with Dr. Prieſtley, any expreſſions, which are capable of being drawn, by conſtruction and refinement, to a ſenſe that may ſeem but indirectly favourable to his own notions, are an explicit *acknowledgment* of the writer who uſes them, that things actually were, as Dr. Prieſtley is inclined to repreſent them. If ſuch expreſſions of one writer

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 7.

† —— both Origin and Epiphanius acknowledge that the Nazarenes and Ebionites were the ſame people and held the ſame tenets. Hiſt. Corrup. vol. I. p. 7.

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are quoted by another; they amount to an acknowledgment to the ſame purpoſe, on the part of the writer who makes the quotation. On the other hand the acknowledgment of an original writer may ſometimes be inferred from a negligent citation. Hath Euſebius, complaining of a total diſregard to truth among the ſectaries who denied our Lord's Divinity, appealed, in confirmation of the charge, to a writer of the ſecond century; who alleges it againſt the Unitarians of his own time, as an inſtance of the moſt hardened effrontery, that they had the audacity to aſſert, that their tenets had been originally taught by the Apoſtles, and were maintained by all the Roman biſhops in ſucceſſion to the time of Victor*? This heavy accuſation, thus ſupported by the teſtimony of an earlier writer, is a plain *acknowledgment*† on the part of Euſebius, that the Unitarians conſtantly claimed this high antiquity of their doctrine. And what may ſeem more paradoxical, this writer's appeal to "certain pſalms and odes, the compoſitions of "faithful brethren in the firſt age, which celebrate the "Divinity of the Chriſt the word of God‡," is only

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. lib. v. c. 28.

† "It is *acknowledged* by Euſebius, and others, "that "the ancient Unitarians themſelves conſtantly aſſerted, that "their doctrine was the univerſal opinion of the Chriſtian "church till the time of Victor." Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. II. p. 486. Compare, vol. I. p. 18, 19.

‡ Ψαλμοι δὲ ὁσοι καὶ ὠδαι, ἀδελφων ἀπ' ἀρχης ὑπο πιστων γραφεισαι, τον λογον τȣ θεȣ τον Χριστον ὑμνȣσι θεολογȣντες. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. lib. v. c. 28. Compare Epheſ. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. James v. 13.

a proof of Eusebius's inability to confute the claim, which, by his own acknowledgment, was set up*. Hath the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, in an inaccurate citation of a passage in Origen, made Origen speak of the Unitarians of his time as pious persons? This is a candid acknowledgment†, on the part of Origen, of the piety of those sectaries; whereas Origen says not that they were pious, but that they boasted‡ that they were pious, or affected piety. Piety, and the affectation of piety, belong to opposite characters. According to this enlarged use of the word *acknowledgment*, it will indeed be very hazardous to deny but that an acknowledgment to any purpose may be found in any writer, or be drawn from any words. It is necessary therefore to declare, that it is only in the usual meaning of the word, that I take upon me to averr, that no acknowledgment of the supposed identity of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, is to be found either in Origen or Epiphanius‖. Origen says, indeed, of the Jewish Christians of his own time, that they were Ebionites§: Not meaning to make any acknowledgment in favour of the proper Ebionites, as no worse heretics than the Nazarenes; but rather to stigmatise the Nazarenes with an op-

* ——— in refuting their pretensions to antiquity, he goes no farther back than Irenæus and Justin Martyr. Hist. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 19.

† Origen candidly calls these adherents to the strict unity of God pious persons. Hist. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 57.

‡ —— πολλὰς φιλοθέους εἶναι εὐχομένους ——

‖ See Appendix. § Contra Cels. lib. 2.

probrious

probrious appellation. And the only concluſion which is to be drawn from this paſſage of Origen, is that the word Ebionite had in his time out-grown its original meaning; which it eaſily might do; inaſmuch as, by its derivation, it is not naturally deſcriptive of any particular ſet of opinions; but barely expreſſive of the contempt, in which thoſe who beſtowed it, held the knowledge and underſtanding of the party on which it was beſtowed. It was therefore likely to be variouſly applied at different times, according as one or another folly incurred the contempt either of any particular writer, or of the age in which he flouriſhed. Accordingly it appears from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, that the uſe of it was various and indefinite. Sometimes it was the peculiar name of thoſe ſects, which denied both the Divinity of our Lord and his miraculous conception. Then its meaning was extended to take in another party; which, admitting the miraculous conception of Jeſus, ſtill denied his Divinity, and queſtioned his previous exiſtence. And at laſt it ſeems the Nazarenes, whoſe error was rather a ſuperſtitious ſeverity in their practice, than any deficiency in their faith, were included by Origen in the infamy of the appellation. It was natural indeed for Origen, fond as he was of myſtic interpretations of the Jewiſh ſcriptures, and poſſeſſed with the imagination that every particular of the ritual ſervice, and every occurrence in the Jewiſh ſtory, was typical of ſomething in the goſpel diſpenſation; it was natural for Origen to think meanly of a ſect,

who held the obſervance of the letter of the ceremonial law to be an eſſential part of a Chriſtian's duty. They certainly had little apprehenſion of the free ſpirit of the religion they profeſſed; and this with Origen would be the ſureſt mark of a low and beggarly underſtanding. It is in this reproachful appellation, which he alone of all the writers of antiquity hath beſtowed upon the Nazarenes, that Dr. Prieſtley hath diſcovered his acknowledgment in favour of the Ebionites. For Epiphanius, who is joined with Origen in this acknowledgment, he deſcribes the Nazarenes and the Ebionites as different ſects, maintaining different opinions; except that they agreed in retaining more or leſs of the Moſaic ſervice *.

16. Among other ſpecimens of our author's happy art of turning every thing, by a dextrous interpretation, to his own purpoſe, it were injuſtice to the injured memory of Euſebius, not to mention the attempt that is made to ſhake the credit of his hiſtory, by repreſenting the unfairneſs with which that candid writer is ſuppoſed to treat the Unitarians; when he ſays, "that Theodotus, who appeared "about the year 190, was the firſt who held that

* See this two-fold queſtion, concerning the Faith of the Nazarenes, and the diſtinction between the Nazarenes and Ebionites, largely diſcuſſed in the ſecond of Dr. Prieſtley's Letters to me, the ſixth and ſeventh of my Letters in reply, the third of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, and my Remarks on his Second Letters, Part II. chap. ii. and iii.

"our

" our Saviour was a meer man; when in refuting " their pretenſions to antiquity, he goes no further " back than to Irenæus and Juſtin Martyr, though " in his own writings alone he might have found a " refutation of his aſſertion *." It muſt be confeſſed, that any one who ſhould aſſert that Theodotus was the firſt who taught a doctrine, which ſunk our Lord into the rank of meer man, might eaſily be confuted from the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of Euſebius; in which the Cerinthians and the Ebionites, who are taxed by all antiquity with that impiety, are referred to an earlier period. The truth however ſeems to be, that the doctrine of our Lord's Humanity, like all corruptions, had its ſtages; that it was carried by degrees to the height, which it at laſt attained; and that Theodotus, in this article, ſo far ſurpaſſed the earlier Hereſiarchs, that the merit of being the inventor of the meer humanity, in the preciſe and full meaning of the words, is with great propriety and truth aſcribed to him. When the Cerinthians and the Ebionites affirmed that Jeſus had no exiſtence previous to Mary's conception, and that he was literally and phyſically the Carpenter's Son; it might juſtly be ſaid of them, that they aſſerted the meer humanity of the Redeemer: eſpecially as it could not be foreſeen, that the impiety would ever go a greater length than this, of aſcribing to him an origin meerly human. Theſe Heretics, however, went no further, as I conceive, than to deny our Lord's Original Divinity: they admit-

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 19.

ted I know not what unintelligible exaltation of his Nature*, which took place, as they conceived, upon his aſcenſion, by which he became no leſs the object of worſhip, than if his Nature had been originally divine. But when a more daring (though, I confeſs, a far more conſiſtent) ſect aroſe; denying that our Lord in Glory is more than a mortal man, raiſed, as all the juſt will one day be, to immortality; or that he is more the object of adoration than Enoch or Elijah: theſe younger Heretics eclipſed the glory of their timid anceſtors, and might juſtly claim the honour of being the firſt aſſertors of the meer humanity of Chriſt; for they were indeed the firſt, who made humanity the whole of his condition. It was undoubtedly in this exalted ſenſe, that the Humanity of Chriſt was taught by Theodotus. For nothing ſhort of this might ſerve his purpoſe; which, as we learn from Epiphanius, was to extenuate the guilt of a renunciation of his faith, which he had made under the terrors of perſecution, by ſetting up a plea, that, in renouncing Chriſt, he had not renounced his God, but a man. This plea could be of no ſervice to Theodotus's cauſe, unleſs Chriſt were a man, not only in his origin, but at the time when Theodotus renounced him. It was therefore that ſublime doctrine, which is at this day taught in the conventicles † of Dr. Prieſtley and Mr. Lindſey,

* See the fourteenth of my Letters in Reply, §. 5.

† That the aſſemblies held by Mr. Lindſey in Eſſex-ſtreet, and by Dr. Prieſtley at Birmingham, are ſtrictly CONVENTICLES

Lindſey, the doctrine of our Lord's meer undeified Humanity, which Theodotus, the learned tanner of Byzantium, a deſerter of his Lord, and a fugitive from his country, broached at Rome in the end of the ſecond century. This doctrine Dr. Prieſtley will perhaps find it difficult to trace to any earlier period, or to any more reſpectable origin. No injury, therefore, is done to the Unitarian cauſe, when Theodotus is ſaid to be the firſt author of the Unitarian doctrine in this exalted, finiſhed, form. But after all, this is not, what Dr. Prieſtley imagines it to be, the aſſertion of Euſebius. It is the aſſertion of a writer cited by Euſebius without any name. It ſhould ſeem that he was of the Latin church, and that his expreſſions are to be underſtood with particular reference to the ſtate of religion in the weſtern world, eſpecially at Rome. Now it was probably true, that Theodotus was the very firſt who at Rome, in any ſenſe, taught the meer Humanity of Chriſt. For notwithſtanding the corrupt ſtate of the Roman church in later ages, it is notorious that ſhe was the laſt of all infected with any groſs hereſy. As for the pretenſions of the Unitarians, which it might be incumbent upon Euſebius to refute, they were not ſimply pretenſions to antiquity. The

TICLES in the genuine forenſic meaning of the word, ſee proved in the ſeventeenth of my Letters in Reply, §. 8; and my Remarks on Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, part II. chap. iv. §. 6. And that Dr. Prieſtley is, by his principles, diſqualified to be the Paſtor of any thing better than a Conventicle, ſee proved by his own confeſſion in the ſeventeenth of his Second Letters to me.

antiquity of the Unitarian doctrine, in a certain form, is confeſſed. Its antiquity is proved by the expreſs cenſure which is paſſed upon it in St. John's writings, both in his Firſt Epiſtle and in his Goſpel, as a dangerous errour which was in being when he wrote. But the pretenſions of the Unitarians, which Euſebius contradicts, were pretenſions to a *prior* antiquity. The pretence that their own doctrine was original; and the doctrine of the church, in the time of Zephyrinus, novel. And in refuting theſe pretenſions, the writer quoted by Euſebius, goes back to the Apoſtlic age: he goes back to thoſe Pſalms and Odes, which ſeem to be alluded to in the Apoſtolic Epiſtles, and to the books of Holy Writ *.

II.

1. By theſe ſpecimens a judgment may be formed of the arguments and of the facts by which our author's firſt aſſumption is ſupported. By expoſing the weakneſs of our author's arguments, and by the proof which hath been produced from the writings of Ignatius, that the Divinity of the Son, his full Divinity, was acknowledged by the immediate diſciples of the Apoſtles (a proof, which had not the work been long ſince done by the learned Biſhop

* See this queſtion about Theodotus purſued in the eighth of Dr. Prieſtley's Firſt Letters to me, the poſtſcript, §. 4, and the fourteenth of my Letters in Reply.

Bull

Bull, might have been ſtrengthened with a copious collection of paſſages to the ſame purpoſe from Ignatius, Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Hermas, and the authentic acts of the Martyrdom of Polycarp) by the detection of the fallacy of the arguments on the one ſide, and by the poſitive proof adduced on the other; our author's notion of the faith of the firſt Chriſtians, that it was purely Unitarian, is overturned. And if this notion of the firſt Chriſtians be overturned; the aſſertion, that the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity was an invention of the ſecond race, falls with it. For what was believed by the firſt race, could be no invention of the ſecond. Nor can any argument be drawn, from any reſemblance that may be imagined between the Trinity of the Chriſtian Church, and the Three Principles of the Platoniſts, that the doctrine of the Apoſtles was not rightly underſtood by their firſt converts: unleſs indeed it could be proved (which is the tacit aſſumption upon which this objection is founded) that the diſcoveries of Revelation and the inveſtigations of philoſophy may never coincide. But why is it ſuppoſed that nothing can be a part of an inſpired teacher's doctrine, which had been taught before by wiſe men, who were not inſpired? Were every iota of the Goſpel Doctrine to be found in the writings of the Greek Philoſophers, this would not be ſufficient to ſet aſide the pretenſions of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity to a Divine commiſſion. The juſt concluſion from ſo perfect an agreement would only be, that for the great importance of

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theſe doctrines to the manners of mankind, it had pleaſed God to make diſcoveries to all men by Revelation, to which a few only could attain by abſtract reaſoning. The caſe indeed is far otherwiſe. It is ever to be remembered, for the mortification of man's pride, and to the praiſe of God's mercy, that "when the world by wiſdom knew not God," when philoſophy had made its utmoſt efforts, not entirely without ſucceſs, but with little general advantage, "it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching," by a method of inſtruction, which in the article of religious information, hath aboliſhed the diſtinction between the philoſopher and the idiot, "to ſave them that believe." But had our ſuppoſed caſe actually obtained, had Revelation diſcovered nothing more to all than reaſon had previouſly taught a few, ſtill to teach all and to teach a few is ſo different a buſineſs, that the previous attainments of philoſophers would have afforded no objection againſt the pretenſions of the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, ſufficient to overturn the evidence by which their claim to a Divine commiſſion is ſupported. Much leſs may a reſemblance, more or leſs exact, between faith and philoſophy in ſingle articles, create a preſumption, that thoſe articles of faith, of which certain philoſophical opinions ſeem to carry a reſemblance, made no part of the doctrine which thoſe inſpired teachers taught. The reſemblance may ſeem indeed a wonderful fact, which may juſtly draw the attention of the ſerious and inquiſitive. And if it ſhould be deemed incredible, as well it may, that

reaſon

reaſon, in her utmoſt ſtrength, ſhould ever aſcend ſo high, as to attain even to a diſtant glimpſe of truths, which have ever been eſteemed the moſt myſterious diſcoveries of Revelation: it will become a queſtion of the higheſt curioſity and importance, to determine by what means the Platonic ſchool came by thoſe notions of the Godhead, which, had they been of later date than the commencement of Chriſtianity, might have paſſed for a very mild corruption of the Chriſtian faith; but being in truth much older, have all the appearance of a near, though very imperfect view, of the doctrine which was afterwards current in the Chriſtian church.

2. The enquiry becomes more important, when it is diſcovered, that theſe notions were by no means peculiar to the Platonic ſchool: that the Platoniſts pretended to be no more than the expoſitors of a more antient doctrine: which is traced from Plato to Parmenides: from Parmenides to his maſters of the Pythagoræan ſect: from the Pythagoræans to Orpheus, the earlieſt of the Grecian Myſtagogues: from Orpheus to the ſecret lore of the Egyptian prieſts, in which the foundations of the Orphic Theology were laid. Similar notions of a triple principle prevailed in the Perſian and Chaldæan Theology; and veſtiges even of the worſhip of a Trinity were diſcernible in the Roman ſuperſtition in a very late age. This worſhip the Romans had received from their Trojan anceſtors. For the Trojans brought it with them into Italy from Phrygia. In Phrygia it was introduced

introduced by Dardanus ſo early as in the ninth century after Noah's flood. Dardanus carried it with him from Samothrace; where the perſonages, that were the objects of it, were worſhipped under the Hebrew name of the Cabirim. Who theſe Cabirim might be, has been matter of unſucceſsful enquiry to many learned men. The utmoſt that is known with certainty is, that they were originally Three, and were called by way of eminence, the Great or Mighty Ones: for that is the import of the Hebrew name. And of the like import is their Latin appellation, *Penates*. *Dii per quos penitus ſpiramus, per quos habemus corpus, per quos rationem animi poſſidemus**. *Dii qui ſunt intrinſecus, atque in intimis penetralibus cœli*†. Thus the joint worſhip of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the Triad of the Roman Capitol, is traced to that of the THREE MIGHTY ONES in Samothrace‡; which was eſtabliſhed in that iſland, at what preciſe time it is impoſſible to determine, but earlier, if Euſebius may be credited, than the days of Abraham.

3. THE notion therefore of a Trinity, more or leſs removed from the purity of the Chriſtian faith, is found to have been a leading principle in all the antient ſchools of philoſophy, and in the religions of

* Macrob. Saturnal. lib. III. c. 4.

† Varro apud Arnob. lib. III. p. 123 Lugd. Bat. 1651.

‡ —— Tarquinius Demarati Corinthii filius,— *Samothraciis myſticè imbutus*, uno templo ac ſub eodem tecto, numina memorata conjungit. Macrob. Saturnal. lib. III. c. 4.

almoſt

almoſt all nations; and traces of an early popular belief of it appear even in the abominable rites of idolatrous worſhip. If reaſon was inſufficient for this great diſcovery, what could be the means of information, but what the Platoniſts themſelves aſſign, Θεοπαραδοτος Θεολογια. "A Theology delivered from "the Gods," i. e. A Revelation. This is the account which Platoniſts, who were no Chriſtians, have given of the origin of their maſter's doctrine. But from what Revelation could they derive their information, who lived before the Chriſtian, and had no light from the Moſaic? For whatever ſome of the early fathers may have imagined, there is no evidence that Plato or Pythagoras were at all acquainted with the Moſaic writings: not to inſiſt, that the worſhip of a Trinity is traced to an earlier age than that of Plato or of Pythagoras, or even of Moſes. Their information could be only drawn from traditions founded upon earlier revelations: from ſcattered fragments of the antient Patriarchal creed; that creed, which was univerſal before the defection of the firſt idolaters, which the corruptions of idolatry, groſs and enormous as they were, could never totally obliterate*. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is rather confirmed than diſcredited by the ſuffrage of the heathen ſages: ſince the reſemblance of the Chriſtian

* "——What Socrates ſaid of him, what Plato writ, "and the reſt of the heathen philoſophers of ſeveral na- "tions, is all no more than the twilight of Revelation, after "the Sun of it was ſet in the race of Noah." Dryden's Preface to *Religio Laici*.

faith

faith and the Pagan philoſophy in this article, when fairly interpreted, appears to be nothing leſs than the conſent of the lateſt and the earlieſt revelations.

III.

1. Our author's aſſumption, that the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity was an innovation of the Platonic Chriſtians of the ſecond century, being overthrown by direct proof, that this pretended innovation was a part of the faith of the firſt Chriſtians: all oblique and ſecondary arguments, that might otherwiſe create a preſumption in our author's favour, are rendered wholly inſignificant. To Dr. Prieſtley it ſeems a circumſtance of great importance, that theſe early writers "ſometimes drop the perſonifica-"tion of the Logos (which in his opinion had been "their firſt ſtep towards the deification of our Sa-"viour*) and ſpeak of it as the meer attribute of "God†." This he imputes to the difficulty, with which new opinions lay hold upon the mind, and to the natural prevalency of good ſenſe, which is ſuch that it will in all caſes often get the better of imagination‡. Facts themſelves ſhould be eſtabliſhed, before conſequences are deduced from them. Let us therefore conſider the example by which this aſſertion is ſupported.

* Hiſt. Corrup. part I. ſect. II.

† Hiſt. Corrup. vol. I. p. 35. ‡ Ibid.

2. Theophilus

2. THEOPHILUS of Antioch ſays, " that when " God ſaid, *Let us make man*, he ſpake to nothing " but his own Logos, or Wiſdom*." It muſt be confeſſed, that the example is happily choſen. It is clear that in this paſſage of Theophilus, as it is expreſſed in Dr. Prieſtley's tranſlation, the Logos is deſcribed as *nothing but* the Wiſdom of God: nothing but *His Own* Wiſdom. His own Wiſdom muſt be that internal Wiſdom, which is a power of his own Mind, a property of his own Perſon: and to ſay that God ſpake to " Nothing but his own Wiſdom," is to ſay, that he ſpake to no one but himſelf. Dr. Prieſtley methinks hath ſpared to make the uſe he might have done of this paſſage of Theophilus; which ſeems not only to be an inſtance in which Theophilus drops the perſonification of the Logos in his own writings; but to prove, that as far as the interpretation of the Old Teſtament is of any importance, the authority of this learned and antient biſhop of Antioch ſtands with the Unitarian ſcheme. This learned biſhop tells us, that the writers of the Old Teſtament, if ever they ſeem to allude to a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, ſpeak figuratively, and are to be underſtood accordingly. The alluſion is perhaps no where ſtronger, than in thoſe words of Moſes in the Book of Geneſis, " God ſaid, Let us make." God not only ſpeaks; " God ſaid:" but God ſpeaks in the plural number; " Let us make:" as though perſons were addreſſed, who were to take part with the ſpeaker in the buſineſs to be done. Theophilus, the celebrated biſhop of Antioch, Theophilus ſo reſpecta-

* Hiſt. Corrup. vol. I. p. 35.

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ble for his antiquity, his piety, and his learning; Theophilus cautions us, not to be over confident of the conſequences which we draw from this rigid expoſition of the ſacred writer's words. Theophilus affirms, that the expreſſion is purely figurative; ſignifying only that before man was made, the purpoſe of making him aroſe, and was contemplated, in the Divine intellect. The expreſſion deſcribes an internal deliberation of the Divine mind concerning the intended work; juſt as the private thoughts and purpoſes of a man are ſometimes expreſſed under the figure of a diſcourſe paſſing within himſelf. All this Theophilus affirms in Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh. Nothing of this Theophilus affirms ſpeaking for himſelf in his own language*, ἐκ ἀλλῳ δε τινι εἰρηκε, Ποιησωμεν, ἀλλ' ἡ τῳ ἑαυτε Λογῳ, καὶ τῃ ἑαυτε Σοφιᾳ. The "Nothing but" of Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh conveys quite another idea than the ἐκ ἀλλῳ τινι ἀλλ' ἡ of Theophilus's Greek. The Logos and the wiſdom, as different names of one thing, are connected by the disjunctive *Or* in Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh; as names of different things they are connected by the copulative *And*, [Καί,] in Theophilus's Greek. The exact rendering of Theophilus's words is to this effect. "It was to no other perſon" (that is the proper force of ἐκ ἀλλῳ τινι, haud alii cuipiam) "It was to no "other perſon that he ſaid, *Let us make*, than to his "own Word, and to his own wiſdom." τῳ ἑαυτε Λογῳ καὶ τῃ ἑαυτε Σοφιᾳ. The repetition of the demonſtrative article with the pronoun, as well as the

* Ad. Autolyc. p. 114. Oxon. 1684.

connection

connection by the copulative, clearly ſhews that Λογος and Σοφια, the Word and the Wiſdom, are different things. Hath Dr. Prieſtley written a hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity, and hath he yet to learn, that in the language of Theophilus and of the beſt writers of his age, the Word and the Wiſdom (Λογος and Σοφια) are uſed as proper names of the ſecond and third perſons of the Trinity? If his own reading in thoſe early fathers hath been ſo confined, that not one of the clear unequivocal inſtances that occur in Theophilus himſelf, in Origen, in Tatian, and Irenæus, hath ever fallen under his own proper obſervation; he might have been informed of this peculiarity of their ſtile, from the notes which accompany the text of Theophilus in Biſhop Fell's edition printed at Oxford in 1684; which, as it is inſerted in his catalogue* of *principal* editions, it is poſſible he may have ſeen. Theophilus's aſſertion, that God ſpake to no other perſon than his Word and his Wiſdom, is an aſſertion that he ſpake to perſons of no leſs dignity, than the Son and the Holy Ghoſt. It is an aſſertion of the Catholic expoſition† of the text, and of the conſequences deduced from it, in oppoſition to the Jewiſh expoſitors of that age;

* Dr. Prieſtley's Preface, p. xxii.

† That this is the true expoſition, that the text deſcribes a conſultation which paſſed between the perſons of the Godhead, is ſhewn with great brevity, but with the higheſt degree of evidence and perſpicuity in Dr. Kennicott's diſſertation on the Tree of Life, p. 29, 30.—Compare the ſame diſſertation, p. 71.

who contended that this ſpeech of God was addreſſed to the angels. Theophilus therefore in this paſſage hath not dropped the perſonification of the Logos; that is, he hath not receded from the aſſertion of the perſonality of the Word. He affirms not, that the Logos, ſo often mentioned by himſelf and other writers as a perſon, is no perſon, but meerly the Divine Attribute of Wiſdom; which, in the uſual language of Grammarians, were rather to aſſert the perſonification* than to drop it: but by the names of the Word and the Wiſdom he diſtinguiſhes two different perſons; ſaying, theſe were the perſons to whom God ſpake.

IV.

1. We have ſeen by what ſort of arguments our author's two firſt aſſertions, "That the faith of the "firſt age was Unitarian, and that the doctrine of our "Lord's Divinity was an invention of the ſecond," are ſupported. If he hath ſucceeded no better in the proof of his third aſſertion, concerning the Platonic Chriſtians of the ſecond age, the inventors, as he would have it, of our Lord's Divinity; that the Divinity which they ſet up was only of that ſecondary ſort, which was admitted by the Arians, including neither eternity, nor any pròper neceſſity of exiſtence, having the meer name of Divinity, without any thing

* Of my miſapprehenſion of the word *Perſonification*, as uſed by Dr. Prieſtley, and how little it affects my argument, ſee the thirteenth of my *Letters in reply*, § 2——5.

of

of the real form: if the proof of this third aſſertion ſhould be found to be equally infirm with that of the other two, his notion of the gradual progreſs of opinions from the meer Unitarian doctrine to the Arian, and from the Arian doctrine to the Athanaſian faith, muſt be deemed a meer dream or fiction in every part.

2. It muſt be acknowledged, that the firſt converts from the Platonic ſchool, took advantage of the reſemblance between the Evangelic and the Platonic doctrine on the ſubject of the Godhead, to apply the principles of their old philoſophy to the explication and the confirmation of the articles of their faith. They defended it by arguments drawn from Platonic principles; they even propounded it in Platonic language: which to themſelves and their contemporaries was the moſt familiar and intelligible, that could be employed upon ſo abſtruſe a ſubject. Nor was this practice to be condemned, ſo long as the ſcriptures and the catholic traditions were made the teſt of truth; ſo long as Revelation was not preſſed into the ſervice of philoſophy, by any accommodation of the pure evangelical doctrine to preconceived opinions; but philoſophy was made to exert her powers in the defence of Revelation, and to lend her language to be the vehicle of its ſacred truths. Theſe might be deemed the moſt promiſing means that could be employed, for bringing over more converts from the pagan ſchools. And the writers, who evangelized in this philoſophical ſtile, conceived perhaps, that they had the ſanction of an

Apoſtle's example, " for becoming all things to all " men, that they might gain ſome."

3. But whatever might be the purity of their intentions, they were guilty of an unpardonable deviation from the primitive faith, if it be true that they maintained the doctrine which Dr. Prieſtley aſcribes to them; namely that the Son is the meer contingent creature of the Father's Will and Power; a production which hath not always exiſted*. We have ſeen that this was not the belief of the firſt age; and if it is to be found in the writings of the ſecond, it could indeed be nothing better than a corruption of religion by philoſophy.

4. To judge of the truth of a writer's propoſition, and even to divine of what ſort the arguments will be, which he will allege in ſupport of it, it is ſometimes ſufficient that the preciſe tenour of it be clearly underſtood. They were converts from Platoniſm, they were Chriſtians, who, with their Chriſtianity, are ſuppoſed to have retained their Platoniſm, to whom Dr. Prieſtley aſcribes the notion of a Logos which had not always exiſted, but began to be, like other creatures, by an act of the Father's Will. After all that Dr. Prieſtley hath written, about the reſemblance between the Eccleſiaſtical and the Platonic Trinity; he hath yet, it ſeems, to learn that a created Logos, a Logos which had ever not exiſted, was no leſs an abſurdity in the Academy, than it is an impiety in the Church. The converts from Platoniſm muſt have renounced

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 42, 44, 62.

their

their philoſophy, before they could be the authors of this abſurd, this monſtrous opinion*. As the notion that this doctrine took its riſe with them, betrays a total ignorance of the genuine principles of their ſchool; it is eaſy to foreſee, that the arguments brought in ſupport of it, can only be founded in groſs miſconſtructions of their language. That this is indeed the caſe will be abundantly proved by a ſingle inſtance.

5. ATHENAGORAS is one of the writers to whom Dr. Prieſtley refers for a proof of his aſſertion. The paſſage which he cites, as affording a proof that Athenagoras believed not that Chriſt had always exiſted, or that the Logos had always exiſted, otherwiſe than as an attribute of the Divine mind, happens to be one, in which that philoſophic Father aſſerts the eternity of the Logos, as a diſtinct perſon, in the moſt explicit terms; and argues in ſupport of it from a certain relation of the Logos to the paternal intellect, which the name, Logos, implies. "Athenagoras," ſays Dr. Prieſtley, "calls Chriſt "the firſt production of the Father; but ſays, he "was not always actually produced; for that from "the beginning God, being an eternal mind, had "reaſon in himſelf, being from eternity rational†." But let us hear Athenagoras himſelf‡. "If," ſays

* See more upon this ſubject in the eighth of Dr. Prieſtley's Firſt Letters to me, and the thirteenth of my Letters in reply, §. 8.

† Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 36.

‡ See the entire Greek paſſage, p. 56.

he, " endowed as you are with ſuperior underſtand-
" ing" (he addreſſes the emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and Lucius Aurelius Commodus) " it ſhould occur to you to enquire, whence it is " that he is called a Son, I will explain it in a few " words. [It is] that he is to the Father [as] the " firſt offspring. Not as ſomething made" (This is the true ſenſe of the words, in which Dr. Prieſtley imagines that it is ſaid that Chriſt was not always produced) " Not as ſomething made. For " God, being an eternal intelligence, himſelf from " the beginning had the Logos in himſelf, being " eternally rational." The learned father undertakes to explain to the philoſophical emperors, why the Second Perſon in the ever bleſſed Trinity is called the Son. He tells them, that this name is expreſſive of a certain relation, which the Second Perſon ſtands in to the firſt, who is called the Father; which relation is that of the eldeſt born. But leſt the relation of primigeniture ſhould lead to the notion of a proper phyſical generation, which would ſink the Son into the rank of a creature (for generation is only a particular way in which certain things are made) he ſays, that the birth or generation of the Son, is not to be underſtood as if he were ſomething that had been ever made: as if his Being had commenced, at any certain time, by the inducement of a form upon a præexiſting material. For that is the general notion of a making; although in common ſpeech it is uſual to ſay of thoſe things only, that they are made, to which the form is given at once by

by the hand of the artiſt. When the form is gradually brought on by the plaſtic powers of nature, the ſecret proceſs is called Generation; which is therefore but a ſort of making, and differs from that which is uſually called a Making, in the means only by which the end is compaſſed. Athenagoras therefore gives the Emperors a caution, not to underſtand by the Generation of the Son, a generation in the literal ſenſe of the word, which comes under the general notion of a Making: not to underſtand by it any thing like that natural proceſs, by which the bodies of plants and animals, and ſome other ſubſtances, are carried forward from a potential to an actual exiſtence. The generation of the Son cannot be underſtood, he ſays, of any ſuch production, becauſe his actual exiſtence is from eternity. This, he ſays, is the neceſſary conſequence of the confeſſed eternity of the Father. The Logos hath exiſted from eternity, in union with the Father; "becauſe God, being eternally rational, ever had the Logos in himſelf." The ſenſe is, that the perſonal ſubſiſtence of a divine Logos is implied in the very idea of a God. And the argument reſts on a principle which was common to all the Platonic fathers, and ſeems to be founded in ſcripture, that the exiſtence of the Son flows neceſſarily from the Divine Intellect exerted on itſelf; from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections. But as the Father ever was, his perfections have ever been, and his intellect hath been ever active. But perfections, which have ever been, the ever-active Intellect muſt ever have con-

templated; and the contemplation which hath ever been, muſt ever have been accompanied with its juſt effect, the perſonal exiſtence of the Son. Athenagoras having thus proved, that the generation of the Son can be only a figurative generation, proceeds to explain the figure, by aſſigning the particular tranſaction to which he conceives it to allude; which is no commencement of the Son's exiſtence; not even that act of the paternal mind, in which the exiſtence of the Son originates: but the going forth of the Son to exert his powers in the buſineſs of creation. "He is," ſays Athenagoras, "to the "Father as the firſt offspring; not as ſomething "that was ever made; but that he went forth to be "idea and energy in material ſubſtances, which "lay yet in chaos, unqualified and undiſtinguiſhed; "the denſe promiſcuouſly mingled with the rare, "waiting the operation of the active ſpirit to im-"pregnate them with form*." Here, indeed, the Son

* εἰ δε, δι ὑπερβολην συνεσεως, σκοπειν ὑμιν ἐπεισιν, ὁ παις τι βυλεται· ἐρω δια βραχεων, πρωτον γεννημα εἰναι τῳ πατρι. ἐκ ὡς γενομενον· ἐξ ἀρχης γαρ ὁ Θεος, νους ἀϊδιος ὠν, εἰχεν αὐτος ἐν ἑαυτῳ τον λογον, ἀϊδιως λογικος ὠν· ἀλλ' ὡς των ὑλικων συμπαντων ἀποιὸ φυσεως και γης ὀχειας ὑποκειμενων δικην, μεμιγμενων των παχυμερεστερων προς τα κουφοτερα, ἐπ' αὐτοις ἰδεα και ἐνεργεια εἰναι προελθων. There ſeems to be ſome corruption in the words και γης. A learned clergyman of the archdeaconry of St. Alban's, conjectures, that γης ſhould be της. Nor can I deviſe any better emendation. The general ſenſe of the paſſage cannot but be very clear,

Son of God is called an idea, and an energy. But it is not, that he is underſtood to be an unſubſtantial idea, or energy, of the Paternal Mind; but a living idea, energiſing on the matter of the univerſe, to ſtamp it with the forms of things. And his generation is affirmed to be no commencement of his exiſtence, but the firſt exertion of his powers in the production of external ſubſtances: or to uſe a more Platonic phraſe, the firſt projection of his energies. προϐολη των ἐνεργηματων.

6. If any thing be juſtly reprehenſible in the notions of the Platonic Chriſtians, it is this conceit, which ſeems to be common to Athenagoras with them all, and is a key to the meaning of many obſcure paſſages in their writings, that the external diſplay of the powers of the Son in the buſineſs of creation, is the thing intended, in the ſcripture lan-

clear, to thoſe to whom the imagery of the Platoniſts is in any degree familiar.

A paſſage of Hermes Triſmegiſtus, preſerved by Suidas and Cedrenus, and Malela, may ſomewhat illuſtrate this paſſage of Athenagoras. Ην φως νοερον προ φωτος νοερȣ, και ȣδεν ἑτερον ἠν ἡ τȣτȣ ἑνοτης· ἀει ἐν ἑαυτῳ ὠν, ἀει τῳ ἑαυτȣ νοι και φωτι και πνευματι παντα περιεχει· ἐκτος τȣτȣ ȣ θεος, ȣκ ἀγγελος, ȣ δαιμων, ȣκ ȣσια τις ἀλλη. παντων γὰρ κυριος, και θεος, και πατηρ, και παντα ὑπ ἀυτȣ και ἐν ἀυτῳ ἐςιν. ὁ γὰρ Λογος ἀυτȣ προελθων, παντελειος και γονιμος και δημιȣργος ἐν γονιμῳ ὑδατι πεσων † ἐγκυον ἐποιησε το ὑδωρ.

† Malela has ἐν γονιμῳ φυσει πεσων, for ἐν γονιμῳ ὑδατι.

guage,

guage, under the figure of his generation*. A conceit which ſeems to have no certain foundation in Holy Writ, and no authority in the opinions and the doctrines of the preceding age: and it ſeems to have betrayed ſome of thoſe, who were the moſt wedded to it, into the uſe of a very improper language; as if a new relation had taken place between the Firſt and the Second Perſon, when the creative powers were firſt exerted. The indiſcretion of preſuming to affix a determinate meaning upon a figurative expreſſion, of which no particular expoſition can be ſafely drawn from Holy Writ, is in ſome degree atoned by the object, which theſe writers had in view. It was evidently their intention, to guard the expreſſions of Scripture from miſconſtruction. They thought to lead men away from the notion of a literal generation, by aſſigning to the figure a particular meaning, which it might naturally bear, and which, whether it was the true ſenſe of it or no, ſeemed not to claſh with any explicit part of the Revelation. The converſion of an attribute into a perſon, whatever Dr. Prieſtley may imagine, is a notion to which they were entire ſtrangers. They held indeed that the exiſtence of the Son neceſſarily and inſeparably attached to the attributes of the paternal mind: inſomuch that the Father could no more be without the Son, than without his own attributes. But that the Son had been a meer attribute, before he became a perſon; or that the paternal attributes were older than the Son's perſonal ex-

* See the thirteenth of my Letters in Reply, §. 12, 15.

iſtence,

iſtence, is a doctrine which they would have heard with horror and amazement. With horror, as Chriſtians; with amazement, as philoſophers!

7. It is but juſtice to Dr. Prieſtley to acknowledge, what indeed he ought to have acknowledged for himſelf, that in this miſinterpretation of the Platonic fathers, he is not original: that he hath upon his ſide the reſpectable authority of two very eminent divines of the Roman church; Petavius and Huetius: which however is no more than a ſingle authority; the pious biſhop of Avranches, upon this ſubject, being but the echo of the very learned jeſuit. It is not the ſeaſon to revive paſt quarrels; one is therefore unwilling to recollect the motives, which induced Petavius to belie his better knowledge, and to charge the philoſophical fathers of the ſecond century with errors, which he was too learned not to know no Platoniſt could entertain. But at the time when Petavius wrote, the minds of the moſt enlightened and liberal of the Romaniſts were ſo ill reconciled to the ſeparation of the reformed churches from their communion, that it was the faſhion for the champions of the Papal ſuperſtition, in order to weaken the ſupport which they were ſenſible the Proteſtant cauſe received from the writings of the fathers of the three firſt centuries, to take every method to derogate from their authority. And this it was thought could in no way be more effectually done, than by bringing them under a ſuſpicion of miſbelief, in doctrines which the reformed churches

and

and the Roman hold in equal reverence. The learned Petavius conſidered not, that he ſacrificed the cauſe of our common Chriſtianity to the private views of his own church, in thus attempting to corrupt the ſtream of tradition at the very fountain head. His arguments, which Dr. Prieſtley hath attempted to revive, are examined and confuted, with great erudition and ability, by the excellent Biſhop Bull in the third ſection of his Defence of the Nicene Faith.

8. The laſt ſpecimen which I ſhall produce of Dr. Prieſtley's manner of arguing from authorities, ſhall be taken from his ſhort account of the word *Trinity**. This word, he ſays, firſt made its appearance in the writings of Theophilus biſhop of Antioch. But Dr. Prieſtley thinks "it is not clear "that by it he meant a Trinity conſiſting of the "ſame perſons, that it was afterwards made to con-"ſiſt of:" and he affirms that it is certain, a Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead was not meant by Theophilus. And thus Theophilus, for the ſecond time, is brought to give evidence againſt his own opinion. But whence ariſes the certainty, that a Trinity of Perſons is not meant by Theophilus? From no other circumſtance that I can perceive, but that the word Trinity is expreſsly expounded in the text of Theophilus by God, his Word, and his Wiſdom. "The three days," ſays Theophilus, "which preceded the creation of the luminaries,

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 99.

"were

" were types of the Trinity; of God, and of his " Word, and of his Wiſdom *." It hath already been obſerved that God, his Word, and his Wiſdom, in the phraſeology of Theophilus's age, were uſed for Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. It is unneceſſary in this aſſembly to cite the numerous examples that occur in Theophilus, Tatian, Irenæus, and Origen. It may be more uſeful to explain the grounds upon which, as I conceive, this language was adopted.

9. We have ſeen that the Platonic Fathers, although they held the eternity of the Second Perſon no leſs than of the Firſt, imagined that his generation ſignified a particular tranſaction, which took place at a certain time. And it is probable that, although they held the eternity of the Holy Spirit, yet they conceived that the proceſſion expreſſed ſome projection of his energies, which took place at the ſame time with that, which they underſtood to be the generation of the Son. They imagined that the Second Perſon was not properly a Son, before that event, which they underſtood by his generation: and they would equally imagine that the Third was not properly the Spirit, before the event which they underſtood by his proceſſion. But they conceived, that the Second Perſon had ever been the Word;

* ὡσαύτως καὶ αἱ τρεις ἡμεραι [προ] των φωτηρων γεγοννιαι, τυποι εἰσιν τῆς τριαδος· τε Θεε, καὶ τε Λογε αὐτε, καὶ τῆς Σοφιας αὐτε. Theoph. ad Autol. lib. 2. p. 106. Oxon. 1684. I have taken the liberty to inſert the prepoſition προ, the want of it being evidently an omiſſion.

and

and that the Third had ever been the Wiſdom. Of the Firſt they conceived that he was not properly a Father, before the Second was a Son; although he ever had been God. I have already given my opinion of theſe ſubtle diſtinctions: for which the beſt apology (for an apology they need) is the evident good intention of the writers, who firſt maintained them. But upon theſe diſtinctions, whether juſt or viſionary, their phraſeology ſeems to have been founded. They thought the names of God, the Word, and the Wiſdom, which expreſs of each of the three divine perſons, what each hath always been, were appellations to be generally preferred to thoſe of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, which expreſs relations only, which, according to their fancy, had not always been. And this explains the reaſon, why they uſed the word, God, as the peculiar appellation of the Father. It was not that they ſcrupled to aſcribe an equal divinity to all the Three Perſons; but that rejecting the ſimpler nomenclature founded on relations, they deſired to call each perſon by the name which they conceived to be moſt deſcriptive of his eſſence: and of the eſſence of the Father they could find no name at all deſcriptive but the general appellation, God.

10. The three names therefore, God, the Word, and the Wiſdom, in the language of Theophilus's age, were underſtood to be equivalent to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: and when Theophilus expounds the word Trinity, by God, his Word, and his Wiſdom, it is juſt the ſame thing as if he had rendered it by

by Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. How this expoſition may create a doubt, whether Theophilus's Trinity conſiſted of the ſame perſons with the Trinity of later ages; how it may produce a certainty that Theophilus's was not a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, it is not my buſineſs to explain. Dr. Prieſtley ſhould have opened this myſtery: but he hath not condeſcended to give his readers any further light, than his own naked aſſertion, that the thing is, as he would chuſe that it ſhould be; which in this, as in other caſes, he ſeems to think may paſs for a ſufficient proof of any of the paradoxes of his own party.

11. PERHAPS his doubt about the real meaning of the word, and his confident perſuaſion that it was no Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, have ariſen from the obſcurity of which he complains, in the ſubſequent part of the ſentence, where the Word and the Wiſdom are mentioned again. It is indeed but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that theſe words are uſed in the ſame ſenſe in both places. But in this ſecond place, the Wiſdom, Dr. Prieſtley might imagine, could be no Divine Perſon. For in Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh the latter clauſe of the ſentence runs thus. "The fourth "day is the type of Man, who needs Light, that the "Word may be God, and the Man Wiſdom." This paſſage, Dr. Prieſtley obſerves, is "certainly obſcure "enough." You all, I am perſuaded, agree in the truth of his remark; and you will equally agree in mine, if I venture to ſay much more of the latter clauſe; that it is certainly unintelligible—in Dr. Prieſtley's

ley's tranſlation. But turn to the original—The whole obſcurity will vaniſh; and inſtead of it, you will find that ſtriking perſpicuity of language, which is the characteriſtic beauty of Theophilus's ſtile. Having ſaid that the three firſt days of creation were types of the Trinity, Theophilus adds, "That the fourth was a "type of Man, who is in need of Light. That there "might be, or, So that there is, God, the Word, "the Wiſdom, Man*." This laſt clauſe is nothing but an enumeration of all that had been mentioned, as typified in the firſt four days of creation. To explain how theſe days were types of what they are ſuppoſed to repreſent, might indeed be difficult: but in the age of Theophilus, the great art of interpreting the Old Teſtament was ſuppoſed to conſiſt in making types out of every thing. The ſenſe, however, of the writer is expreſſed with the greateſt perſpicuity. It is evident from his own expoſition of the word, that he ſpeaks of no other Trinity than Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. It appears therefore from the teſtimony of Theophilus, that the word was uſed at firſt in no other ſenſe, than that which it hath borne in later ages. The word hath not changed its original meaning; but in this, as in moſt of his aſſertions, Dr. Prieſtley is confuted by his own authorities.

* ὡσαυτως καὶ αἱ τρεις ἡμεραι [προ] των φωστηρων γεγονυιαι, τυποι εἰσιν τῆς τριαδος· τε Θεε, καὶ τε Λογε αὐτε, καὶ της Σοφιας αὐτε. τελαρτη δε τυπος ἐστιν ἀνθρωπε· ὁ προσδεης τε φωτος· ἱνα ᾖ Θεος, Λογος, Σοφια, Ανθρωπος. Ad Autol. lib. 2. p. 106. Oxon. 1684.

I FEEL

12. I FEEL no ſatisfaction in detecting the weakneſſes of this learned writer's argument, but what ariſes from a conſciouſneſs, that it is a diſcharge of ſome part of the duty, which I owe to the church of God. It is a mortifying proof of the infirmity of the human mind, in the higheſt improvement of its faculties in the preſent life, that ſuch fallacies in reaſoning, ſuch miſconſtructions of authorities, ſuch diſtorted views of facts and opinions, ſhould be found in the writings of a man, to whom of all men of the preſent age ſome branches of the experimental ſciences are the moſt indebted.

V.

1. MAY I be permitted to cloſe this long addreſs, with a word of exhortation to the younger members of the prieſthood.

2. THE actual ſtate of things is ſuch, that, to the greater part of thoſe who engage in it, our holy profeſſion muſt furniſh the means of a ſubſiſtence. The conſequence is, that we are obliged to enter upon it in an early ſeaſon of our lives, when it is well if we have previouſly laid a good foundation in our minds of the very firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt: and a due proficiency in theological ſtudies, muſt be the attainment of future induſtry. To the novitiates therefore of our order, conſidered as unfiniſhed Theologians, I take the liberty to recommend the diligent ſtudy of the works of biſhop Bull; eſpecially of his writings

on the ſubject of the Trinity, with the annotations of Grabe his learned editor. In theſe they will find an exact and critical detail of the opinions of the fathers of the three firſt centuries. They will find the faith of the church of England confirmed, and proved to be the original faith, by a tradition traced with certainty to the apoſtolic age. And they will find every argument refuted, which the Unitarian party have yet been able to form upon their own views of the opinions of the earlieſt ages.

3. The ſtudy of Biſhop Bull, if leiſure is not wanting, may be followed, or accompanied, with advantage by that of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians: of the original hiſtorians, I mean, Euſebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodorit. As for modern hiſtories, the uſe of them, without a previous acquaintance with the ancient writers, is rather to be diſcouraged than recommended. By thoſe who are already learned in the ſubject, they may be redde indeed with emolument; as commentaries on the antient text of hiſtory, as it lies in the original writers, which may occaſionally throw light upon dark and doubtful queſtions. But as books of elementary inſtruction for beginners, they will generally be pernicious. For it will too often be found to be the caſe, that the narrative is accommodated, not thro' premeditated fraud, but in the meer error of prejudice, either to the private opinions of the writer, or to the intereſts of his ſect. Of this Dr. Prieſtley's work is a ſtriking example. No work was perhaps ever ſent abroad, under the title of a Hiſtory, containing

taining leſs of truth than his, in proportion to its volume.

4. From eccleſiaſtical hiſtory the ſtudent learns what the faith of the church hath at all times been; and he is enabled to ſeparate the pure doctrine of the firſt age from all later innovations: a matter at all times of the higheſt moment; but of particular importance in the preſent juncture, when the whole ability and learning of the Unitarian party is exerted, to wreſt from us the argument from tradition. The importance of the argument from tradition reſts upon the ſuppoſed infallibility of the firſt preachers. The opinion of their infallibility reſts upon the belief of their divine illumination. The conſequence of a Divine illumination is, that their whole doctrine muſt have been, not indeed obvious to the human underſtanding, not within the reach of its unaſſiſted powers to diſcover, but conſonant to the higheſt reaſon, nor too difficult, when propounded, for the human apprehenſion; and though not free from paradoxes, certainly not encumbered with contradictions. No tradition therefore may avail to prove, that any manifeſt contradiction, that a part, for inſtance, is equal to the whole, or that the ſame thing in the ſame reſpect is at the ſame time one and many, was a part of the apoſtolic doctrine; if the inſpiration of the Apoſtles be admitted. Or, if it ſhould appear, from the evidence of a tradition which cannot reaſonably be queſtioned, that the Apoſtles really required the belief of contradictions under the name of

myſteries; their pretence to inſpiration will be refuted, and the credit of their doctrine overturned. For as the evidence of intuition is far ſuperior to that of ſenſe; no external evidence may eſtabliſh the belief of a contradiction; ſince no teſtimony that a contradiction is, ſhould be allowed to overpower the intuitive conviction, that it cannot be. An inquiry therefore into the reaſonableneſs of our faith, as well as juſt views of its hiſtory, is of great importance.

5. The reaſonableneſs of our faith will be beſt underſtood from the writings of the fathers of the firſt three centuries. And among theſe, thoſe wicked Platoniſts of the ſecond age, who, in Dr. Prieſtley's judgment, ſowed the ſeeds of the antichriſtian corruption, deſerve particular attention; for the great perſpicuity with which in general they expound the faith, and the great ability with which they defend it. And as theſe corrupters brought with them into the church the language of their ſchool (I ſay the language, for its opinions, except ſo far as they harmonized with the Goſpel, they had the ingenuity to retract*) the writings of the Pagan Philoſophers, particularly the Platoniſts, will be of conſiderable uſe to the Chriſtian ſtudent; as they will bring him more acquainted with a phraſeology, which is uſed even by the Chriſtian Platoniſts: nor for this purpoſe only, but for ſome degree of light which they will throw upon the argument. The error of the later

* See the beginning of Juſtin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, and Theophil. ad. Autol. lib. 2.

Platoniſts

Platoniſts was, that they warped the genuine doctrine of the original tradition, their Θεοπαραδοτος Θεολογια, to a form in which it might be in friendſhip with the popular idolatry. Their writings therefore are a mine, in which the true metal is indeed mingled with a droſs of heterogeneous ſubſtances; but yet the richneſs of the ore is ſuch, as may well repay the coſt and trouble of the ſeparation. Or if leiſure ſhould be wanting for a minute ſtudy of a ſubject, which may ſeem but of a ſecondary importance; it will at leaſt be expedient, I had almoſt ſaid it will be neceſſary, to know ſo much of the opinions of heathen antiquity, as is to be learned from thoſe authentic documents, which the induſtry of the indefatigable Cudworth hath collected and arranged with great judgment, in his Intellectual Syſtem.

6. The advantage to be expected from theſe deep reſearches, is not any inſight into the manner in which the three Divine Perſons are united; a knowledge which is indeed too high for man, perhaps for angels; which in our preſent condition at leaſt is not to be attained, and ought not to be ſought. But that juſt apprehenſion of the Scripture doctrine, which will ſhew that it is not one of thoſe things that "no miracles can prove*," will be the certain fruit of the ſtudies recommended. They will lead

* "They are things which no miracles can prove," ſays Dr. Prieſtley in his Addreſs to Mr. Gibbon, ſpeaking of the doctrines of the Trinity, and the Atonement. See Hiſt. Corrup. vol. II. p. 561.

us to ſee the Scripture doctrine in its true light: that it is an imperfect diſcovery, not a contradiction. That the Catholic Faith is not properly compared with the tale of Mahomet's Journey to the third heaven; his conferences there, while the pitcher of water fell; or even with the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation*: that even the Athanaſian Creed is ſomething very different from a ſet "of contradictions, "the moſt direct which any perſon the moſt ſkilled "in Logic might draw up†." A cenſure, which could hardly have fallen from our learned adverſary, Unitarian as he is, had he but known ſo common a book as Dr. Waterland's Hiſtory and Paraphraſe. In the opinions of the Pagan Platoniſts, we have in ſome degree an experimental proof, that this abſtruſe doctrine cannot be the abſurdity, which it ſeems to thoſe who miſunderſtand tt. Would Plato, would Porphyry, would even Plotinus have believed the miracles of Mahomet, or the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation? But they all believed a doctrine, which ſo far at leaſt reſembles the Nicene, as to be loaded with the ſame or greater objections. By every one who will thus combine the ſtudies of Divinity and Philoſophy, the truth of Plato's obſervation, I am perſuaded, will be ſoon experienced; that to thoſe who apply themſelves to theſe ſpeculations, with a humble diſpoſition to be taught, rather than with the unphiloſophical and irreligious habit of deciding

* Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. II. p. 461.

† Hiſt. of Corrupt. vol. I. p. 87.

haſtily

haſtily upon the firſt view of difficulties, what at firſt appeared the moſt incredible, will in the end ſeem the moſt evident and certain; and maxims, which ſeemed at firſt indiſputable, will be diſcarded*.

7. An extenſive erudition in Pagan as well as Chriſtian antiquity, joined with a critical underſtanding of the ſacred text, is that which hath ſo long enabled the clergy of the church of England, to take the lead among Proteſtants as the apologiſts of the apoſtolic faith and diſcipline; and to baffle the united ſtrength of their adverſaries of all denominations. God forbid, that through an indolence, which would be unpardonable, we ſhould ever loſe the ſuperiority, which we have ſo long maintained. The acquiſition of learning is indeed laborious, but the fruit is ſweet. The private ſatisfaction that it muſt give to every miniſter of the Church of England, to underſtand, that his engagements to the eſtabliſhment are perfectly conſiſtent with his higher obligations to God and Chriſt, is alone ſufficient to repay the labour of the ſtudies, which afford this comfortable conviction, and contribute to its daily growth. But private ſatisfaction is not the end of our purſuits. The nobler end is public edification. It is a maxim of Dr. Prieſtley's, that every man, who in his conſcience diſſents from the eſtabliſhed church, is obliged in conſcience to be a declared

* Plato in Epiſt. ad Dionyſ.

diſſenter. I honour the generoſity of the ſentiment.

——————φιλον ειπη
Φιλειν· πολι δ' εχθρον, α-
τ' εχθρος εων, λυκοιο δικαν υποθευσομαι,
Αλλ' αλλοιε παλεων, οδοις σκολιαις——

It ought much more to be the ſentiment of every one who ſtands with the received doctrine, to be a declared Churchman. If he would reap any ſolid advantage from the purity of his faith, he muſt be an open and avowed believer; leſt if he confeſs not Chriſt, his God and Saviour, before men, he ſhould not be at laſt confeſſed before the angels of heaven. If this confeſſion be the general duty of every man, who feels conviction; it is the particular duty of every one, who hath been called to the Evangeliſts' office. He holds the authority of his commiſſion for no other purpoſe, but to be a witneſs of the truth. A conviction that it is the truth, founded on a deep inveſtigation of the ſubject, will ſupply him with firmneſs to perſevere in the glorious atteſtation, unawed by the abilities of his antagoniſts, undaunted by obloquy, unmoved by ridicule: which ſeem to be the trials which God hath appointed, inſtead of perſecution, in the preſent age, to prove the ſincerity and patience of the faithful. The advocate of that ſound form of words, which was originally delivered to the ſaints, hath to expect that his opinions will be the open jeſt of the Unitarian party: that his ſincerity will be called in queſtion; or if "a bare *poſſibility* of

of his being in earneſt*" be charitably admitted, the misfortune of his education will be lamented, and his prejudices deplored. All this inſult will not alarm nor diſcompoſe him. He will rather glory in the recollection, that his adherence to the faith of the firſt ages hath provoked it. The conviction, which he will all the while enjoy, that his philoſophy is Plato's, and his creed St. John's, will alleviate the mortification he might otherwiſe feel in differing from Dr. Prieſtley; nor ſuffer him to think the evil inſupportable, although the conſequence of this diſſent ſhould be, that he muſt ſhare with the excellent Biſhop of Worceſter, in Dr. Prieſtley's "Pity and "Indignation†.', Not indeed that he will hold any good man's good opinion cheap: or eſteem it a light evil, that a conſcientious attachment to the truth ſhould embroil him with thoſe, whoſe talents he will revere, and whoſe virtues he will love. But he will eſteem it but a temporary evil: an evil which Providence in mercy hath appointed for the trial of his faith, and the improvement of his habits of diſintereſted obedience: an evil therefore which the ſpirit of a Chriſtian will ſupport; ſuffering neither the misfortune to detect, nor the injury to irritate. Adoring the wiſdom of that myſterious diſpenſation, which, to heighten human virtue, ordains that it ſhould often

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. II. p. 471.

† To ſee ſuch men as Biſhop Hurd in this claſs of writers [the defenders of the eſtabliſhment] when he is qualified to claſs with Tillotſon, Hoadley, and Clarke, equally excites one's pity and indignation. Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. II. p. 471.

miſs

miſs the reward, which diſintereſted virtue ever covets moſt; of that diſpenſation, which makes even error and raſh judgment a uſeful part of the diſcipline of the preſent life; he will not diſgrace the cauſe, which he ſhould ſupport, by any uncharitable concluſions concerning the actual motives, or the future doom, of thoſe whoſe opinions he may think it his duty to oppoſe. Nor, in the neceſſary aſperity of debate, will he haſtily retaliate their unjuſt aſperſions. He will admit much more than a poſſibility, that Dr. Prieſtley may be in earneſt in all his miſinterpretations of the ſcriptures and the fathers, and in all his miſrepreſentations of facts. Appearances to the contrary, however ſtrong, he will refer to the faſcinating power of prejudice, and to the deluſive practice of *looking through* authors*, which the hiſtorian of religious opinions ought to have redde. Though truth in theſe controverſies can be only on one ſide; he will indulge, and he will avow, the charitable opinion, that ſincerity may be on both. And he will enjoy the reflection, that by an equal ſincerity, through the power of that blood, which was ſhed equally for all, both parties may at laſt find equal mercy. In the tranſport of this holy hope he will anticipate that glorious conſummation, when faith ſhall be abſorbed in knowledge, and the fire of controverſy for ever quenched. When the ſame generous zeal for God

* "I have taken a good deal of pains to read, or at leaſt "look carefully through, many of the moſt capital works of "the antient Chriſtian writers."—Dr. Prieſtley's Preface, p. xvii.

and

and Truth, which too often, in this world of folly and confuſion, ſets thoſe at wideſt variance whom the ſimilitude of virtuous feelings ſhould the moſt unite, ſhall be the cement of an indiſſoluble friendſhip; when the innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, and people (why ſhould I not add of all ſects and parties) aſſembled round the throne ſhall, like the firſt Chriſtians, be of one ſoul, and one mind, giving praiſe with one conſent to Him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb that was ſlain to redeem them by his Blood.

APPENDIX.

WHILE theſe ſheets were in preparation for the preſs, Dr. Prieſtley was challenged by a writer in the Monthly Review for June (who the critic may be, I know not—he appears to be learned in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and I am well pleaſed to find that his views of Dr. Prieſtley's argument in many particulars agree with mine) Dr. Prieſtley was challenged by this writer, to point out the particular paſſages in Origen's writings, in which he had conceived an acknowledgment of the identity of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites to be contained. Dr. Prieſtley's reply hath already made its appearance; in which he is reduced to the neceſſity of confeſſing, that he hath no ſuch paſſage to produce*. Still, however, he maintains, that the identity of theſe ſectaries, although not acknowledged by Origen, is to be inferred from Origen, Epiphanius, and Euſebius†. But this is ſtill affirmed, without reference to the particular paſſages, either of Origen or of Euſebius, from which the inference is to be drawn: nor is the reader informed, in which of Origen's works that *deſcription* is to be found of the opinions of the Ebionites, which repreſents them as the ſame

* See Dr. Prieſtley's Reply to the Monthly Review, p. 5.

† See Corrections and Additions, &c. at the end of the Reply.

opinions

opinions which others aſcribe to the Nazarenes, and makes it appear that Origen had no idea of any difference between the two ſects *. Dr. Prieſtley makes a reference indeed to the 13th tract of Origen's Commentary upon St. Matthew's Goſpel †; but this is for another purpoſe; for proof, of what needs indeed no proof at all, that the Ebionites were of two ſorts; the one admitting, the other denying, the miraculous conception, while both rejected the divinity of the Redeemer. What proof of this ſecondary propoſition is to be found in the 13th of the Exegetics upon St. Matthew's Goſpel, I know not. I ſuſpect an error of the preſs; and that the reference ſhould have been to the 16th of the Exegetics in the 3d ſection, which treats of the cure of the blind near Jericho. In that tranſaction, as St. Mark relates it, Origen imagines that the two diviſions of the primitive church, the Gentile and the Jewiſh converts, are allegoriſed. Jericho is the world. The multitudes which follow our Lord from Jericho, are the converts from paganiſm to the true faith; who forſake the world to follow Chriſt. The blind beggar is a half-converted Jew, addicted to the Ebionæan hereſy; whoſe eyes are at laſt opened to the truth of the Goſpel. If this be not the reference which Dr. Prieſtley meant to make, let me adviſe him to adopt it in the emended edition of his work, which he ſeems to promiſe. Beſides that the very purport of the expoſition, which

* Reply, p. 5.

† See the References, p. 4, of the Reply.

places

places the characteriſtic diſtinction between the Gentile and the Jew convert in a belief or diſbelief of Chriſt's Divinity, may ſeem to militate ſtrongly for his favourite opinion, that the whole Hebrew church was Unitarian; he will find one ſentence in particular in this diſcourſe, or a part at leaſt of one ſentence, which, I am perſuaded, he will think worthy to be written in characters of gold. Και ἐπαν ἰδῃς των ἀπο Ιουδαιων πιστευοντων ἐις τον Ιησουν την περι τ̃ς σωτ̃ρος πιστιν, ὁτε μεν ἐκ Μαριας καὶ Ιωσηφ ὁιομενων αὐτον ἐιναι, ὁτε μην ἐκ Μαριας μονης και τ̃ Θειȣ πνευματ̃ς, ἐ μην και μετα της περι αὐτȣ Θεολογιας, ὀψει κ. τ. λ.—— "——and when you conſider, what belief they of "the Jewiſh race, who believe in Jeſus, entertain "of the Redeemer; ſome thinking that he took his "being from Mary and Joſeph, ſome indeed from "Mary only and the Divine Spirit, but ſtill without any belief of his Divinity: you will underſtand, &c." Theſe expreſſions taken by themſelves may ſeem to intimate, that the ſect of the Ebionites, in its two great branches, embraced, in the time of Origen, the whole body of the Hebrew Chriſtians. But let the learned reader attentively peruſe the whole diſcourſe, let him conſider well the ſubject and the ſtile; and he will perceive, that as the ſubject is not hiſtory, neither is the ſtile of the ſedate hiſtoric kind. The object of the diſcourſe is to *ſpiritualize* a plain ſtory. An attempt in which the imagination of the writer is always buſier than the judgment: and the ſtile, even in alluſion to hiſtorical facts, is generally rather warm than exact, and

is

is apt to border on the vehement and the exaggerated. This is in ſome degree the caſe in this diſcourſe of Origen's. His expreſſions are therefore to be interpreted by the known tenor of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory: Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory is not to be accommodated to his expreſſions. That the Jewiſh converts were remarkably prone to the Ebionæan hereſy, from which the Gentile churches in general were pure, is the moſt that can be concluded from this paſſage, ſtrengthened as it might be with another, ſomewhat to the ſame purpoſe, in the Commentaries upon St. John's Goſpel. But what if it were proved, that the whole ſect of the Nazarenes was abſorbed in the Ebionæan hereſy in the days of Origen? What evidence would that afford of the identity of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites in earlier times? And even that identity, if it were proved, what evidence would it afford, that the church of Jeruſalem had been originally Unitarian under her firſt biſhops of the circumciſion?

2. But however indeciſive the pretended teſtimony of Origen may be; Dr. Prieſtley makes himſelf very ſure that Epiphanius is on his ſide. "Epiphanius expreſsly ſays, that Ebion held the ſame opinion with the Nazarenes *." The only inference to be made from this aſſertion, is this: that Dr. Prieſtley hath never troubled himſelf to read more of Epiphanius's account of the Ebionites, than the firſt eleven words of the firſt ſentence. Had he redde the

* Reply, p. 4.

firſt

firſt ſentence to the end, he would have found that Ebion, although he aroſe from the ſchool of the Nazarenes, and held ſimilar opinions, preached alſo other doctrines, of which he was the firſt inventor. Among theſe novelties by the conſent of all antiquity, though not with Dr. Prieſtley's leave, we place the meer humanity of Chriſt, with or without the miraculous conception.

3. STILL Dr. Prieſtley triumphs in the ſilence of Hegeſippus, and the conceſſions of Juſtin Martyr. It were not difficult, to ſhew the inſufficiency of his reply to the learned Reviewer of his work, upon both theſe articles: but I forbear to put my ſickle into another's harveſt. But that it may not be thought ſtrange, that theſe cogent arguments ſhould have been ſuffered to paſs unnoticed in my own animadverſions, and that the omiſſion may not be imputed to the wrong cauſe; it ſeems proper to declare the true reaſon of it, which was this: I wiſhed to confine my ſtrictures to thoſe arguments, in which the learned author ſeemed to me the moſt original. In theſe two he is the leaſt ſo. Both are ſtale. The one is from Zuicker's mint: the other from Epiſcopius. Both have been canvaſſed with great accuracy, and both have been effectually overturned, by that excellent Divine, whom I have ſo often found occaſion to mention, and who never muſt be mentioned without præiſe, the learned and pious biſhop Bull.

THE END.

LETTERS

FROM THE

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBAN's,

IN

REPLY

TO

DR. PRIESTLEY.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER FIRST.

The Archdeacon of St. Alban's declines a regular controverſy with Dr. Prieſtley—Produces new inſtances of Dr. Prieſtley's inaccuracies and miſrepreſentations.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN at the requeſt of the clergy of my archdeaconry, I publiſhed the diſcourſe, in which I had given them my thoughts of your late attack on the doctrine of the Trinity; it was not at all my intention to open a regular controverſy with you upon the ſubject. I cannot think, that you have redde my publication with ſo little diſcernment, as not to perceive in it a deſign of quite another kind; which yet, I fear, I ſhall find it difficult to avow in explicit terms, without giving an offence, which, were it poſſible, I would avoid. But ſince you challenge me to a conteſt, in which it is my reſolution never to engage; not from any diſtruſt of my own cauſe, nor from any dread of the abilities by which I ſhould be oppoſed; but from a perſuaſion that a controverſy, in which ſo little new is to be ſaid on either ſide, could not terminate in the ſatisfaction of either party; it is neceſſary that

LETTER FIRST.

both yourſelf and the public ſhould be made to underſtand, upon what grounds I conceive myſelf at liberty to decline a diſcuſſion to which you ſeem to think me pledged: and for this purpoſe, I muſt declare in very plain language, what I would rather have left you to collect: That my original attack upon your Hiſtory was ſuch, as to lay me under no obligation to proſecute the argument. My attack was not ſo much upon the opinions, which you maintain, however I may hold them in abhorrence, as upon the credit of your Narrative: and if I have ſucceeded in overthrowing that, which the judgment of the learned muſt decide, I am not at all obliged to go into new arguments upon the main queſtion. The objections, which were brought againſt you in my charge, all went to the proof of this ſingle propoſition. That, on which ever ſide the truth may lie in the Trinitarian controverſy—I have no doubt on which it lies; but the footing, upon which I put the diſpute with you, leaves me at liberty to ſuppoſe the matter doubtful; with whatever metaphyſical difficulties the catholic doctrine may be encumbered—thoſe difficulties, when the doctrine is rightly apprehended, are in my judgment not great, but I will allow you to ſay they are inſuperable: whatever ambiguity may be pretended in the expreſſions of Holy Writ, in which the divinity of the Son is generally ſuppoſed to be aſſerted—in the greater part of the texts I perceive no ambiguity, but you may aſſume, if you pleaſe, that not one of them renders a certain meaning; whatever variety and diſagreement is to be found in the orthodoxy of different

ages

ages—for the three firſt centuries the opinion of the church upon this point was uniform, but I give you leave to ſuppoſe it as unſtable as the world of Heraclitus; whatever may be the intrinſic difficulty of the doctrine of the Trinity, however deficient the proof of it from holy writ, and however diſcordant the opinions of different ages, ſtill I affirm, and the proof of this was the whole object of my Charge, that Dr. Prieſtley, great as his attainments are confeſſed to be in the profane ſciences, is altogether unqualified to throw any light upon a queſtion of eccleſiaſtical antiquity.

2. If the inſtances, which I have alleged, of miſinformation and inaccuracy are only ſecondary overſights, ſuch as affect not the main argument, and are incident to the beſt writers in undertakings of ſuch extent as yours; the attempt to depreciate a work of merit, by uncandid cenſure, muſt redound to my own diſgrace. But whoever will take the trouble to compare your work and mine, will find, that with all the illiberal zeal which you aſcribe to me, I was not diſpoſed to cavil about trifles. I fear it will be rather found, that I have erred in the oppoſite extreme; and, leſt I ſhould ſeem too much inclined to cenſure, have paſſed over many inaccuracies, which ought to have been pointed out.

3. Such, for inſtance, is your inverſion of the order of ſucceſſion of the Roman pontiffs; when you

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mention Victor as the ſucceſſor of the biſhop who came after him*.

4. SUCH is your aſſertion†, that in the age of Tertullian it was not pretended "that the ſubject of the "Trinity was above human comprehenſion;" when but a few pages back‡ you had produced a paſſage from Irenæus, in which the generation of the Son, which is a part only of the ſubject, is mentioned as ſo wonderful a thing, as to be underſtood by none "except the Father, who begat, and the Son, who is "begotten."

5. SUCH is your miſrepreſentation of the opinion of Valeſius concerning the cauſe of the loſs of Hegeſippus's hiſtory. Valeſius you ſay "was of opi-"nion that the hiſtory of Hegeſippus was neglected "and loſt by the ancients, becauſe it was obſerved "to favour the Unitarian doctrine.‖" Valeſius hath indeed expreſſed an opinion, that the work of Hegeſippus was neglected by the ancients, on account of errors which it contained. But what the errors might be, which might occaſion this neglect, is a point, upon which Valeſius is ſilent. And what right have you to ſuppoſe, that the Unitarian Doctrine was the error which Valeſius aſcribed to Hegeſippus more than to Clemens Alexandrinus, upon

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 19. † Id. p. 61.
‡ Hiſt. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 37.
‖ Id. p. 9.

whoſe

whoſe loſt work of the Hypotypoſes he paſſes the ſame judgment*?

6. SUCH another inaccuracy, to uſe no harſher word, is your appeal to the teſtimony of Epiphanius, in favour of Noetus; to prove that he was wronged by his adverſaries, when he was accuſed of the patripaſſian hereſy. Noetus's confeſſion, according to Epiphanius, was this; "that he acknowledged one "God, who was begotten, who ſuffered and died." But ſuppreſſing, or in your *rapid glances* having not obſerved, the latter part of this acknowledgment, aſſerting the ſufferings and death of his one God; you produce Epiphanius as an evidence, that— "Noetus was ſimply an Unitarian, declaring upon "all occaſions with great boldneſs, that he neither

* Dr. Prieſtley, in the nineteenth of his Second Letters, to extricate himſelf from this queſtion, endeavours to prove, that the Unitarian doctrines are the only errors that can with probability be aſcribed to Hegeſippus in his loſt work; and that Clemens Alexandrinus, tho' he was himſelf no Unitarian, might, for aught any one now knows to the contrary, have ſaid things in favour of Unitarians in his loſt work of the Hypotypoſes. But whatever proof Dr. Prieſtley may be able to make out that Hegeſippus was an Unitarian, and that Clemens Alexandrinus ſpoke favourably of Unitarians, ſtill I complain that he alleges the authority of Valeſius for more than Valeſius himſelf affirms; and I maintain that this inaccuracy (for I have called it in this inſtance by no worſe name) in the allegation of authorities, is a circumſtance that ought to leſſen his credit as an hiſtorian.

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" knew nor worſhipped any God but one *" *(a)*. Having thus vindicated the injured character of Noetus, you proceed to inform your readers, how it came to paſs, that the Unitarians of that age fell under the imputation of the Patripaſſian error.

7. SUCH another inaccuracy we have in your relation of the judgment, which the Roman Dionyſius paſſed upon certain injudicious antagoniſts of Sabellius; who, to avoid his error, divided the Holy Trinity into three perſons *unrelated* to each other, and diſtinct *in all reſpects*. Εἰς τρεις ὑποστασεις, ξενας ἀλληλων, πανταπασι κεχωρισμενας, διαιρεντας την ἁγιαν τριαδα. Theſe are the words, in which Athanaſius ſtates the opinion, which Dionyſius cenſures: and the cenſure of Dionyſius upon this opinion, Athanaſius quotes with approbation: as well indeed he might; for the opinion of three perſons in the Godhead *unrelated to each other, and diſtinct in all reſpects*, is rank Tritheiſm; becauſe what are unrelated and diſtinct in all reſpects, are Many in all reſpects; and

* Hiſt. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 74.

(a) In the nineteenth of his Second Letters, Dr. P. acknowledges that he ought not to have exempted Epiphanius from the impropriety of charging Noetus with the patripaſſian hereſy. But he ſays, this like the former (the miſquotation of Valeſius) " is a circumſtance of little conſe- " quence to the main argument." Dr. Prieſtley forgets, that the main argument with him and with me goes to different points. His point is the antiquity and the truth of the Unitarian doctrine. Mine is Dr. Prieſtley's incompetency in the ſubject, which he pretends to treat.

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being Many in all reſpects, cannot in any reſpect be One. But in your tranſlation of the paſſage, by omitting the very ſignificant adjective ξενας, and the very emphatical adverb παντλαπασι, you leave hardly any difference between the opinion which Dionyſius cenſured, and the catholic faith, which Athanaſius maintained: and thus you procure yourſelf a fine opportunity of introducing an oblique ſarcaſtic ſtroke at Athanaſius, for concurring in a cenſure upon his own opinions. "Some perſons in oppoſing Sabellius having made three hypoſtaſes, "which we render perſons, ſeparate from each "other, Dionyſius biſhop of Rome, quoted with "approbation by Athanaſius himſelf, ſaid that it "was making three Gods*." Surely truth, candor, and conſiſtency are conſpicuous in the writings of our modern Unitarians, and the Archdeacon of St. Alban's is the only writer of the age, who deals in ſarcaſms!

8. THESE and other inaccuracies, which might have been remarked without any impeachment of my candor, and with advantage to my argument, I ſuffered to paſs unnoticed. I choſe to reſt the ſtrength of my attack rather on the importance, than the variety, of the matter of complaint. If the inſtances of miſtake, which I have alleged, be few in number, yet if they are ſingly too conſiderable in ſize, to be incident to a well-informed writer; if they betray a want of that general comprehenſion of

* Hiſt. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 65.

your

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your ſubject, which might enable you to draw the true concluſions from the paſſages you cite; if they prove you incompetent in the very language of the writers, from which your proofs ſhould be drawn; unſkilled in the philoſophy, whoſe doctrines you pretend to compare with the opinions of the church; a few clear inſtances of errors of this enormous ſize may releaſe me from the taſk, which you would impoſe upon me, of canvaſſing every part of your argument, and of replying to every particular quotation. A writer, of whom it is once proved that he is ill-informed upon his ſubject, hath no right to demand a further hearing. It is a fair preſumption againſt the truth of his concluſion, be it what it may, that it cannot be right, but by meer accident. To be right by accident will rarely happen to any man in any ſubject; becauſe in all ſubjects truth is ſingle, and error infinite.

9. NOT long ſince I was conſulted about a new opinion concerning the actual figure of the earth. I objected, that while the baſis of the author's argument was an aſſumption, that the figure of the meridian is an ellipſis, in his enquiry after the particular ſpecies of the ellipſis, he had aſſigned properties to the curve of the earth's meridian, which the known nature of the ellipſis would not admit. I was challenged to prove a certain relation, which I aſſerted, between the rays of curvature in different parts of the curve—to prove the curvature at the ſecond leſs than at the principal vertex—and at laſt I

was

was challenged, to prove the property from which the ellipſis takes its name. Was I to blame, that I broke off the conference—that I refuſed to contemplate another ſcheme, or to examine another computation?

10. PARDON me, Sir, if plain dealing compels me to profeſs, that I think little leſs reſpectfully of this philoſopher's learning in the conics, than of your attainments in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. I make this avowal with the leſs heſitation, becauſe I find my opinion in ſome meaſure juſtified by your own confeſſions. You confeſs, that my late publication firſt brought you acquainted with the very name of Daniel Zwicker: that from me you have received your firſt information of the conceſſions of Epiſcopius; and the firſt notice of the coincidence of your own opinions, concerning the Platonizing fathers of the ſecond century, with thoſe of Petavius and Huetius: that you had never in your life *looked through* the writings of Biſhop Bull, till my frequent references to them excited your curioſity; as they gave you to underſtand, what before you had never known, that the author is in high eſteem with the clergy of the eſtabliſhment. What is this but to confeſs, that you are indeed little redde in the principal writers, either on your own ſide of the queſtion or the oppoſite? But as no man, I preſume, is born with an intuitive knowledge of the opinions or the facts of paſt ages, the hiſtorian of Religious Corruptions, confeſſing himſelf unredde in the polemical divines,

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divines, confeſſes ignorance of his ſubject. The opinion therefore which I formed, upon a diligent peruſal of your work, is confirmed by your own acknowledgements; and my victory is already ſo compleat, that I might well decline any further conteſt.

11. My alarms (if I ever felt alarm) for the Catholic faith, or for the national eſtabliſhment, as in danger from your attacks, muſt now be laid aſleep; and will be no incentive to any very vigorous exertions againſt a proſtrate enemy *. But the truth is, that I never was alarmed, and it is neceſſary that I ſhould ſet you right in that point. When I ſpake of your extraordinary attempt to unſettle faith, and to break up eſtabliſhments †, I ſpake of the end, to which your wiſhes ſeem to be carried, not of an event which I thought likely to enſue. The utmoſt danger, that I feared, was of an inferior kind: a preſent danger, not to the church, but to the more unwary of her members, who might be miſledde by the juſtly celebrated name of Dr. Prieſtley: a future danger to myſelf, if I forbore to bear my witneſs to the truth. For although we have a promiſe, that the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church, yet the vigilance of the Prieſthood I conceive to be the ordinary means, which God hath provided for

* —'you ſeem to have taken a particular alarm—I hope 'you will exert yourſelf with proportionable vigour——to 'ſave a falling ſtate.' Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 2.

† Charge, §. 3.

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its ſecurity. I therefore thought it my duty to prevent the miſchief, which might ariſe to the unlearned and unſtable, by demoliſhing the credit of your Narrative, and in theſe ſubjects, the authority of your name.

12. THE Letters, which you have lately addreſſed to me, give me no reaſon to alter my opinion or retract my accuſation. They only fix me in the perſuaſion, that to proſecute the diſpute with you, would be to little purpoſe. You will therefore excuſe me, if I decline a controverſy to be carried on, for ſuch I underſtand to be the conditions of the challenge, "till you ſhall have nothing left, which "you may think of conſequence to allege*." When I have ſhewn the inſufficiency of the defence which you have now ſet up, and have collected the new ſpecimens of your hiſtorical abilities, which this new publication ſupplies in great abundance, whatever more you may find to ſay upon the ſubject, in me you will have no antagoniſt.

I am, &c.

* Preface to Letters, p. iii. and xviii.

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A recapitulation of the Archdeacon's Charge.

DEAR SIR,

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IF I could adopt your heroic plan, of writing on till I ſhould have nothing left to ſay, our correſpondence would run to an enormous ſize: for I ſhould have more than a ſingle remark to make upon almoſt every ſentence of every one of your Ten Letters. But as we both write for the edification of the public, and yet few, I fear, will be diſpoſed to give a long or a cloſe attention to our ſubject; the eaſe of our readers, if we mean to be redde, muſt be conſulted. You, I am told, in defiance of your Bookſeller's ſage counſels, deſpiſe ſuch conſiderations. But they will have their weight with me. I ſhall be unwilling either to fatigue by the length, or to perplex by the intricacy or obſcurity of my reaſoning. To avoid the firſt miſcarriage, I ſhall be content to give you a ſufficient, rather than a full reply; and to avoid the ſecond, I ſhall endeavour ſo to frame my argument, that my readers may perceive the force of it, without the trouble and interruption of frequent recourſe to our former publications. For this purpoſe I ſhall begin with a recapitulation of the ſubſtance of my Charge; that before I enter upon particular diſcuſſions, the points to be diſputed may be brought at once in view.

2. The

2. THE general argument of my Charge was a critical review of your Hiſtory, in that part of it which relates to the doctrine of the Trinity in the three firſt ages. This review conſiſted of two parts; a ſummary of the account, which you pretend to give, of the riſe and progreſs of the Trinitarian doctrine; and a view of the evidence, by which your narrative is ſupported, conſiſting of nine ſelect ſpecimens of the particular proofs of which the body of that evidence is compoſed.

3. OF your account of the riſe and progreſs of the Trinitarian doctrine, I ſaid in general, that it is nothing new; that it is in all its eſſential parts the ſame, which was propagated by the Unitarian writers of the laſt century, and, upon its firſt appearance, refuted by Divines of the church of England. Your anſwer to this part of my Charge, is, as I have already had occaſion to obſerve, compleat. You repell the imputation of plagiariſm, by the moſt diſgraceful confeſſion of Ignorance, to which foiled Polemic ever was reduced. To this part of your defence I have nothing to reply.

4. To your evidence, I made the ſame general objection, that it is deſtitute of novelty; conſiſting of proofs long ſince ſet up, and long ſince confuted; that if you have attempted any thing new, it is only to confirm the gratuitous aſſumptions of former Unitarians by inconcluſive arguments, and falſe quotations. The nine ſpecimens of your proofs, by which this

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this heavy accuſation was ſupported, were nothing leſs than your principal arguments in ſupport of your three fundamental aſſertions; That the Primitive church was ſimply Unitarian; that our Lord's Divinity was an innovation of the ſecond century; and that the innovation was made by the Platoniſing fathers. If your principal arguments were fairly adduced as inſtances of weak, inſufficient proof; your whole notion of the gradual progreſs of opinions, from the Unitarian doctrine to the Arian, and from the Arian to the Nicene faith, is overthrown. Of this you have ſhewn yourſelf not inſenſible, by the great pains which you have taken, to what purpoſe will ſoon appear, to anſwer my objections.

5. THE Nine ſpecimens of inſufficient proof were theſe.

6. Two inſtances of the circulating ſyllogiſm. The firſt, when you allege your own ſenſe of Scripture as the clear ſenſe, in proof of your pretended fact, that the Primitive faith was Unitarian; whereas the fact muſt be firſt proved, before your particular interpretation can be admitted. The ſecond, when in like manner you allege the pretended ſilence of St. John about the error of the Unitarians, in proof that the Unitarian doctrine is no error, but the very truth of the Goſpel. The aſſumption that St. John is ſilent upon this ſubject, in his firſt epiſtle, is gratuitous and diſputable. It reſts upon a particular interpretation of St. John's expreſſion, that " Chriſt is come in

in the fleſh," which will be admitted by none, who are not previouſly convinced that St. John's own faith was Unitarian. If St. John's faith was Unitarian, the phraſe that "Chriſt is come in the fleſh" ſignifies only that Chriſt was a man: and thus we ſhall find no cenſure of the Unitarian doctrine in St. John's firſt epiſtle. But if St. John was no Unitarian, but a believer in the incarnation and divinity of our Lord; then the phraſe of Chriſt's coming in the fleſh cannot but be underſtood to allude to both theſe articles, as parts of the true faith; and alluding to both theſe articles, as parts of the true faith, it conveys a cenſure upon the Unitarian doctrine in every form. The aſſumption therefore of St. John's ſilence, concerning the Unitarian doctrine, preſumes another fact, that St. John was himſelf an Unitarian. This is the primary, though tacit aſſumption, on which this argument is built. This argument therefore, fairly analyſed, is found to circulate like the former. For the concluſion to be eſtabliſhed is the pretended fact, that the faith of the Primitive church was Unitarian. The mean of proof is the gratuitous aſſumption, that the faith of St John was Unitarian. But to aſſume the faith of an inſpired Apoſtle, is the ſame thing as to aſſume the faith of the primitive church.

7. My third ſpecimen was an inſtance, in which you cite a teſtimony, which no where exiſts. The pretended teſtimony is of no leſs a perſon than Athanaſius. The fact, to which Athanaſius is made to depoſe, is the high antiquity of the Unitarian faith.

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His teſtimony to this fact you find in his piece upon the orthodoxy of the Alexandrine Dionyſius; in a certain paſſage in which he affirms, that the Jews were firmly perſuaded that the Meſſiah was to be a meer man; and alleges, as you underſtand him, this perſuaſion of the Jews as an apology for a caution, uſed by the Apoſtles, in divulging the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. The Jews, of whom Athanaſius ſpeaks, you prepoſterouſly imagine were Chriſtians, the firſt converts from Judaiſm. Whereas he ſpeaks of plain downright Jews; and what you take for his apology for caution in the apoſtles, is in truth a commendation of the ſagacity, which they diſplayed in a judicious arrangement of the matter of their doctrine.

8. My fourth ſpecimen was your capital argument for the antiquity of the Unitarian faith, founded on the opinions of the Nazarenes. This argument I maintain to be lame and impotent in every part. It is built upon two aſſumptions, of which the one is a meer gratuitous aſſertion, of which no proof is attempted; the other is accompanied with a pretended proof, which ariſes however from a forged teſtimony and an ill-founded aſſertion. The gratuitous aſſumption is, that the Nazarenes and the Hebrew Chriſtians were the ſame people: whereas the fact is, that the ſect of the Nazarenes aroſe after the extinction of the proper church of Jeruſalem. The other aſſumption is, that the faith of theſe Nazarenes was Unitarian. This is proved by the teſtimony of Epiphanius, and by an aſſumption, that the Nazarenes

renes and the Ebionites were the ſame. This aſſertion is unfounded, and the teſtimony of Epiphanius is in fact forged; ſince it is drawn by torture from his words. Indeed it is not pretended to be more than this; that Epiphanius makes no mention "that the Nazarenes believed in the divinity of Chriſt:" and this no-mention is only his confeſſion, that he was totally uninformed, whether they believed the divinity of Chriſt, or not. Were both theſe aſſumptions true, the argument would be compleat. Both are falſe: and were either ſingly true; yet the other being falſe, the concluſion would be either the reverſe of your's, or altogether precarious.

9. My fifth ſpecimen was your miſrepreſentation of Euſebius; whom you charge with inconſiſtency, becauſe another writer, who is quoted by him, ſpeaks of Theodotus, who appeared about the year 190, as the firſt who held that our Saviour was a meer man; when in refuting the pretenſions of the Unitarians to antiquity, he goes no further back than to Irenæus and Juſtin Martyr; although the writings of Euſebius himſelf afford a refutation of the aſſertion. But although the aſſertion, as you chooſe to underſtand it, would be liable to refutation from the writings of Euſebius, it admits an interpretation, by which the ſeeming inconſiſtency is entirely removed. The pretenſions to antiquity, which it was incumbent upon Euſebius, or the author quoted by him, to refute, were not ſimply pretenſions to antiquity, but to a prior antiquity: and in refuting theſe, the au-

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thor quoted by Euſebius goes back to the apoſtolic age.

10. YOUR objection to the doctrine of the church drawn from the reſemblance, which you find between the Chriſtian and the Platonic doctrine, furniſhed my ſixth ſpecimen of inſufficient proof. I acknowledge the reſemblance; but I inſiſt, that it leads to an enquiry into the ſentiments of heathen antiquity, which, purſued to its juſt conſequences, rather corroborates, than invalidates, the traditional evidence of th ecatholic faith.

11. YOUR proofs of your ſecond aſſertion, that the doctrine of our Lord's divinity was an innovation of the ſecond age, are all of an oblique and ſecondary kind: ſuch as, were they liable to no other objection, would lead to no concluſion, without a diſtinct previous proof, that the faith of the firſt age was Unitarian. One of theſe arguments furniſhed my ſeventh ſpecimen of inſufficient proof. It is an inſtance, in which you cite the teſtimony of a Greek writer, to prove the very reverſe of what he ſays. It is alleged by me as an inſtance of your competency in the Greek language in general, and of your particular acquaintance with the phraſeology of the early fathers.

12. MY eighth ſpecimen was taken from your attempt to tranſlate a paſſage of Athenagoras, at which an abler philologer, than you have ſhewn yourſelf to be, unredde in the Platoniſts, might be allowed to ſtumble

ſtumble. I produced it, to convict you of incompetency in the language of the Platoniſts; and to confirm a ſuſpicion, which the very tenor of your third aſſertion might create, that you are ignorant of the genuine doctrines of the Platonic ſchool.

ence it is to be inferred, that you are little to be truſted, when you take upon you to compare the opinions of the firſt Chriſtians, in which you are not learned, with Platoniſm, in which you are a child.

13. My ninth ſpecimen was another inſtance of your ſkill in the Greek language. A paſſage of Theophilus, in which he expounds the word Trinity by Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is produced by you to prove that the uſe of the word Trinity, to denote Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, was unknown to Theophilus. Theophilus's words are ſo very clear, that the ſenſe was hardly to be miſſed, at firſt ſight, by a ſchool-boy in his ſecond year of Greek.

14. These are the nine ſpecimens, by which I ſupport my general charge of the inaccuracy of your Narrative, and in theſe ſubjects, the inſufficiency of its author. To all of them, except the ſeventh and the ninth, you have attempted to reply. With what ſucceſs is to be conſidered.

I am, &c.

LETTER THIRD.

In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's introductory and to part of his firſt Letter.—His defence of his argument from the clear ſenſe of ſcripture confuted.—Of the argument againſt our Lord's pre-exiſtence to be drawn from the materiality of man.—Of the Greek pronoun ἐτος.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER THIRD.

TO remove the imputation of having argued in a circle, when alleging your own ſenſe of ſcripture as the clear ſenſe, you infer, that the faith of the firſt ages was exactly conformable to your own opinions; you tell me, that the clear ſenſe of ſcripture and the hiſtorical evidence are collateral proofs* of the early prevalence of the Unitarian faith. I ſhall admit this, and ſhall retract all that I have written, when once you ſhall have proved to the ſatisfaction of the Chriſtian world, that the Unitarian doctrine is delivered in the holy ſcriptures, taken in their plain and obvious meaning. But while your ſenſe of ſcripture is diſallowed by the majority of Chriſtians, I muſt ſtill contend, that you have no right to call it the clear ſenſe; and that any argument built on a ſuppoſition, that the ſcriptures ſpeak a ſenſe not generally perceived in them, reſts at beſt upon a gratuitous aſſumption. I confeſs, that an argument drawn from a gratuitous aſſumption is not neceſſarily an argument running in a

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 4—6.

circle,

circle, unleſs the only means of reducing the aſſumption to a certainty, be a previous proof of the concluſion to be drawn. But this I affirm to be the caſe in the inſtance under conſideration. When we ſpeak of the clear ſenſe of any piece of writing, this very expreſſion admits a twofold interpretation. The clear ſenſe, may be either that which is clearly conveyed in the words; or a ſenſe, which though it be not clearly conveyed in the words, may be clearly proved, from the context, or from other conſiderations, to be the ſenſe which was really preſent to the mind of the writer. If you allege the clear ſenſe of the ſcriptures, in the firſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, in proof that the primitive faith was Unitarian; I aſk, whether it be not the ſole end and purpoſe of the enquiry into the primitive faith, to ſettle the differences of Chriſtians upon points in which the ſcriptures, if there be any ground in them for the diſputes which have ariſen, are not clear? You now aſſume a ſenſe, which you call their clear ſenſe, upon thoſe very points, in order to aſcertain the primitive faith. This is to reaſon in a circle.

2. But in truth the Unitarian doctrine will never be proved to be the clear ſenſe of ſcripture in the firſt ſenſe of clearneſs. On the contrary, if ever it ſhould be clearly proved to have been the ſenſe of the ſacred writers; the juſt concluſion will be, that of all writers theſe have been the moſt unneceſſarily and the moſt wilfully obſcure. The Unitarians themſelves pretend not that their doctrine is to be found in the plain literal

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ſenſe of holy writ: on the contrary, they take the greateſt pains to explain away the literal meaning. They pretend that the ſacred writers delight in certain metaphors and images, which, however unnatural and obſcure they may ſeem at this day, are ſuppoſed to have been of the genius of the eaſtern languages, and of conſequence familiar to the firſt Chriſtians; who, in the greater part, were of Jewiſh extraction. By the help of theſe ſuppoſed metaphors the Unitarian expoſitors contrive to purge the ſcripture of every thing which they diſapprove, and make it the oracle, not of God's wiſdom, but of their own fancies. When you therefore, as a Unitarian, ſay, that your doctrine is the clear ſenſe of ſcripture, which, according to the ſcheme of interpretation which you follow, hath no clear ſenſe at all; you can only mean, that this doctrine may be clearly proved to be the ſenſe intended by the inſpired writers. Perhaps in my Charge I was too negligent in the interpretation of your expreſſions, when I pretended to expoſe the infirmity of your argument. Be it ſo. This then is your aſſertion. The Unitarian doctrine is clearly the true ſenſe of ſcripture. But where is the proof? You can bring no proof that will be generally convincing, unleſs you can find t in the faith of the apoſtolic ages. The faith of the firſt Chriſtians, once clearly aſcertained, muſt be allowed indeed to be an unerring expoſition of the written word. To prove therefore that the Unitarian doctrine is clearly the true ſenſe of ſcripture, which is your aſſumption, you muſt firſt prove that the primitive faith was Unitarian, which ſhould

be

be your concluſion. Still this argument circulates, and was not improperly alleged by me as my firſt ſpecimen of inſufficient proof.

3. But it is of no great importance to diſpute, where the particular infirmity of this argument may lie; when you confeſs that it is of ſuch a ſort, "that "you could not ſuppoſe it would have any weight "with Trinitarians*." While you condeſcend to employ your rare abilities in framing arguments, which will perſuade thoſe only who are previouſly perſuaded, you will do little harm. Why ſhould I diſturb you in this innocent amuſement?

4. To compenſate for the confeſſed inefficacy of this argument, you tell me of another, which you might have urged, to diſprove not only the divinity, but the pre-exiſtence of our Lord; ſuch an argument it ſeems might have been drawn "from the doctrine "of the materiality of man, which has been ſuffici-"ently proved in your diſquiſitions on matter and ſpi-"rit†." In which, by an analogical proof, you have refuted the vulgar error of the immateriality of the human ſoul, and have in conſequence overthrown the whole ſyſtem of pre-exiſtence. I believe, Sir, the opponents of the Unitarian ſcheme will not be diſpleaſed to underſtand, that it is at laſt to ſtand or fall with Dr. Prieſtley's Syſtem of Materialiſm and Dr. Hartley's Theory of the Mind.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 5. † Letters, p. 5.

5. As

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5. As a ſtriking inſtance of the conformity between the Unitarian doctrine and the clear ſenſe of ſcripture, I produced the initial ſentences of St. John's goſpel; in which, you know, you find a clear refutation of the perſonality of the Logos. In rendering theſe ſentences in Engliſh, I took occaſion to remark, that the Greek pronoun ἅτος naturally renders a perſon. You tell me, "it may refer to any thing that is of the ſame "gender in the Greek language, whether it be a per-"ſon or not †." I never meant to inſinuate the contrary. Give me leave to refer you to a letter which was publiſhed in the Gentleman's Magazine for November laſt, under the ſignature of PERHAPS. You will find it in my Appendix*, and I now declare myſelf the writer of it.

I am, &c.

* Letters, p. 7. † Appendix, No. 1. & 2.

LETTER

LETTER FOURTH.

In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's Firſt Letter.—His defence of his argument from St. John's firſt epiſtle confuted.—The phraſe "come in the fleſh" more than equivalent to the word "to come."—St. John's aſſertion that "Chriſt came in the fleſh," not parallel with St. Paul's, that he "partook of fleſh "and blood."

DEAR SIR,

YOUR argument for the antiquity of the Unitarian doctrine from St. John's firſt epiſtle, the ſecond among my ſpecimens of inſufficient proofs, reſts on a ſuppoſition, that in that epiſtle the Unitarian doctrine is not cenſured. I have, ſhewn* that this ſuppoſition will ſtand or fall, according as one or another interpretation of the phraſe of "com- "ing in the fleſh" ſhall be admitted. That ſingle expreſſion, as it is generally underſtood, reprobates the Unitarian doctrine, and overthrows your ſuppoſition. You muſt therefore eſtabliſh your own ſenſe of the phraſe, before you can be permitted to aſſume, that St. John is ſilent about the Unitarian doctrine. Now to make good this argument, you tell me that "you think," and that "it is your "opinion," that the phraſe of coming in the fleſh is meerly an aſſertion of our Lord's humanity †.

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* Charge, and Letter II. † Letters to Dr. H. p. 8, 10.

Sir,

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Sir, I underſtood from the firſt that this is *your opinion*, and I doubt not in the leaſt your firmneſs in it. But I contend, that no ſuch authority belongs to your opinion, that the bare notification of it ſhould command the aſſent of the whole Chriſtian world, in preference to other opinions, which have more generally prevailed. You muſt juſtify that opinion, if you would give any colour of plauſibility to your argument. But the opinion cannot be juſtified, unleſs it might be previouſly aſſumed, that St. John himſelf was an Unitarian. You will hardly ſay, that any believer in our Lord's divinity and incarnation could employ the phraſe of Chriſt's "coming in the fleſh" without an alluſion, in his own mind, to both thoſe articles, as branches of the true faith. But ſuch an alluſion implies a cenſure of the Unitarians. Till you ſhall have proved, therefore, that St. John was an Unitarian, the phraſe of "Chriſt's "coming in the fleſh" may be thought to contain a cenſure of the Unitarian tenets; and your opinion, that no cenſure of them is contained in St. John's firſt epiſtle, will be diſputable.

2. You ſay, that this phraſe of coming in the fleſh "refers naturally to the doctrine of the Gnoſ-"tics*." I ſay the very ſame thing. But I ſay, that in the ſenſe in which the Church hath ever underſtood it, this phraſe refers to two diviſions of the Gnoſtics; the Docetæ, and the Cerinthians; affirming a doctrine, which is the mean between their

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 9.

oppoſite

oppoſite errors. The Docetæ affirmed, that Jeſus was not a man in reality, but in appearance only: the Cerinthians, that he was a meer man, under the tutelage of the Chriſt, a ſuperangelic being, which was not ſo united to the man as to make one perſon. St. John ſays, "Jeſus Chriſt is come in the "fleſh;" that is, as the words have been generally underſtood, Jeſus was a man, not in appearance only, as the Docetæ taught, but in reality; not a meer man, as the Cerinthians taught, under the care of a ſuperangelic guardian, but Chriſt himſelf come in the fleſh; the Word of God incarnate. St. John ſays, that whoever denies this complex propoſition, is of Anti-chriſt. It ſurprizes me that you ſhould find an improbability, upon the firſt face of the thing, in ſuppoſing that the ſame expreſſion ſhould be equally levelled * at two hereſies, which you confeſs to be oppoſite. For is it not always the caſe, that expreſſions which predicate a truth lying in the middle between two oppoſite falſehoods, equally impugn both the falſe extremes? If I ſay, that when Fahrenheit's thermometer in the open air ſtands at 60° in the ſhade, the weather is mild; do I not equally deny that it is inſufferably hot, or inſufferably cold? "Gnoſticiſm, you ſay, is cer-"tainly condemned by the apoſtle, but not the "doctrine of the Ebionites, tho' it is allowed to "have exiſted in his time †." The doctrine of the original Ebionites, and that of the Cerinthian Gnoſtics, upon the point of Chriſt's divinity, was

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 10. † Id. p. 10.

the

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the ſame. If the apoſtle condemns the one, he condemns the other, whether he lived or lived not to ſee the riſe of the Ebionæan ſect*. I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to ſhew, that the Ebionæan ſect was of later date than you imagine.

3. IT is perhaps from ſomething of a ſecret miſgiving, that your interpretation of the phraſe of coming in the fleſh, will not be allowed to be its natural and obvious meaning; that you are ſo deſirous to retreat into the ſtrong-hold of Jewiſh idioms. You think the phraſe in queſtion "is ſi-"milar to other Jewiſh phraſes†, which you think will be allowed to be merely expreſſive of humanity. I fear, Sir, it hath been the cuſtom of late to lay too much ſtreſs upon Jewiſh idioms, in the expoſition of the didactic parts of the New Teſtament.

* "You inſiſt upon it," ſays Dr. Prieſtley, in the fifth of his Second Letters, "that John does cenſure the Unita-"rian doctrine: which is curious enough; when, *according* "*to your account*, there were no Ebionites or Nazarenes, that "is none who denied the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, till long "after the time of John." But this is not *according to my account*. My account is, that Cerinthus, who was unqueſtionably contemporary with St. John, denied our Lord's pre-exiſtence, and was in this point the precurſor of the Ebionites. And what if I had ſaid, that St. John had cenſured a doctrine not taught till after his death? Do not the fathers perpetually refer to proleptic cenſures of late hereſies in the ſacred writings? Is no proleptic reprobation of the late errors of the Roman church to be found in St. Paul's epiſtles?

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 8.

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The goſpel is a general revelation *. If it is delivered in a ſtyle, which is not perſpicuous to the illiterate of any nation except the Jewiſh; it as much locked up from general apprehenſion, as if the ſacred books had been written in the vernacular gibberiſh of the Jews of that age. The Holy Spirit, which directed the apoſtles and the evangeliſts to the uſe of the tongue, which in their day was the moſt generally underſtood, the Greek, would for the ſame reaſon, it may be preſumed, ſuggeſt to them a ſtyle which might be generally perſpicuous. It is therefore a principle with me, that the true ſenſe of any phraſe in the New Teſtament is, for the moſt part, what may be called its ſtanding ſenſe: that which will be the firſt to occur to common people of every country, and in every age: and I am apt to think, that the difference between this ſtanding ſenſe and the Jewiſh ſenſe will, in all caſes, be far leſs than is imagined, or none at all; becauſe, though different languages differ widely in their refined and elevated idioms, common ſpeech is in all languages pretty much the ſame.

4. But what are thoſe Jewiſh phraſes, with which you would compare the Jewiſh phraſe of "coming in "the fleſh?" They are the word "to come," and the phraſe "partaker of fleſh and blood."

* "The religion of Chriſt was an univerſal religion, and "the doctrines of the goſpel were calculated for the Weſ-"tern as well as the Eaſtern hemiſphere." See Mr. Shepherd's Preface to his *Free Examination of the Socinian expoſition of the prefatory verſes of St. John's Goſpel.*

5. The

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5. THE word "to come" is uſed by metaphor I believe in all languages to ſignify either a man's birth, or firſt entrance into public life. *He came into the world*; *he came into life*; *he came into buſineſs*. I have no where affirmed, that ſuch phraſes denote any thing more than human, in any perſon to whom they may be applied. But is the phraſe "to come in the fleſh" no more than equivalent to the word "to come?" Are the words "in the fleſh" meer expletives?—If they are not expletives, what is their import, but to limit the ſenſe of the word *to come* to ſome particular manner of coming?—This limitation either preſumes a poſſibility of other ways of coming; or it is nugatory. But was it poſſible for a meer man to come otherwiſe than in the fleſh?—Nothing can be more deciſive for my purpoſe, than this compariſon which you have ſuggeſted, between the word "to come," which is general, and the phraſe "to come in the "fleſh," which is ſpecific.—My thanks are due to you for this illuſtration of my argument; which may be rendered ſtill more evident by applying the two phraſes ſucceſſively to a familiar inſtance. If ſome future Hiſtorian of theſe planet-ſtricken times ſhould ſay, "In the latter end of the eighteenth century came "Dr. Prieſtley preaching the Unitarian doctrine," no one will ſuſpect any thing more, than that a man of this name preached this doctrine.—But if the Hiſtorian ſhould ſay, "Dr. Prieſtley came *in the fleſh* "preaching this doctrine;" if the writer, who may uſe this expreſſion, ſhall have any credit in his day, a general curioſity will be excited to know, whether Dr.

Prieſtley

Prieſtley had it in his power to come in any way without his fleſh, "unmanacled with membrane, joint, or "limb:" and when once it ſhall be found, that he had not; the ſtyle of the writer will be condemned, and his credit perhaps leſſened.—I leave you to make the application.

6. But you think, that St. John's phraſe that "Chriſt came in the fleſh," may be expounded by St. Paul's phraſe, that "he was partaker of fleſh and "blood." The paſſage to which you refer is this. "Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of "fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of "the ſame *." As you have only hinted, that ſome argument might be drawn from this text, to confirm your ſenſe of St. John's phraſe; I am left to divine what your argument might be. Perhaps you would reaſon thus. In this paſſage it is ſaid of men, that they are partakers of fleſh and blood: and this expreſſion is evidently deſcriptive of the condition of humanity. It appears therefore, that to be "a partaker of "fleſh and blood" is a Jewiſh phraſe, which ſignifies "to be a man." But in this ſame paſſage it is ſaid of Chriſt, that "he likewiſe took part of fleſh and "blood." It is ſaid of Chriſt therefore that he was a man like other men: conſequently nothing more can be meant by his "coming in the fleſh." If this be your intended argument, I reply, that Chriſt was indeed a man like other men: and this perhaps is all that is implied in St. Paul's aſſertion, that he was "partaker of fleſh and blood." But it follows not,

* Heb. ii. 14.

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that this is all which is implied in St. John's expreſſion, that "Jeſus Chriſt came in the fleſh;" which aſſerts indeed his humanity; but with an evident alluſion to a prior condition: and the proper concluſion from the compariſon of St. John's expreſſion with St. Paul's, is this; that the two are not, as you ſuppoſe, equivalent.

7. BUT I ſuſpect, that you connect St. Paul's expreſſion with your own doctrine of materialiſm; and that you would argue thus. Since it is ſaid of men, who are fleſh and blood, and nothing elſe, that they partake of fleſh and blood; therefore "to *partake* of "fleſh and blood," in the Jewiſh language, and "to "*be* fleſh and blood," in other languages, are equivalent phraſes. Therefore Chriſt, of whom it is alſo ſaid, that he partook of fleſh and blood, was meer fleſh and blood; a man like other men, in whom the mental faculties were the reſult of organiſation. Thus, you will ſay, the notion of Chriſt's pre-exiſtence, much more of his divinity, is overturned by the apoſtle's aſſertion; and, whatever may have been imagined, no alluſion to his pre-exiſtence or his divinity was intended in any expreſſions of the ſacred writers. The aſſertion therefore of Chriſt's real manhood is all that can be contained in St. John's expreſſions, that "Chriſt is come in the fleſh." But in this argument the concluſion reſults not from any evident paralleliſm of the different phraſes uſed by St. Paul and by St. John; but it is a conſequence from a particular interpretation of St. Paul's phraſe: which interpretation of St. Paul reſts not upon any thing in his expreſſions, but

but upon ſomething quite out of ſcripture; upon your notion of the meer materiality of man. To have ſhewn the true foundation of this argument is to have confuted it.

8. I muſt remark, that in whatever form this argument may be drawn, it will reſt ſolely on the tranſlation of the ſacred text. For in the original, man's connexion with fleſh and blood and Chriſt's connexion are expreſſed by different words; κεκοινωνηκε and μετεσχε. A difference, which, however ſlight it may appear to you, was thought of ſufficient importance to be preſerved in the Vulgat. *communicaverant—participavit**.

9. But not to lay a ſtreſs upon any critical refinements upon ſingle expreſſions, let me aſk your opinion, Sir, upon the general ſenſe of the paſſage, in which this phraſe, "to partake of fleſh and blood," occurs. I would appeal to yourſelf, whether the concluſion, which you would build upon that particular expreſſion, is not overthrown by the general ſenſe of the paſſage. The purport of the paſſage is to aſſign a reaſon, why the Redeemer ſhould partake of fleſh and blood; that is, why he ſhould be a man. But a reaſon why a man ſhould be a man, one would not expect to find in a ſober man's diſcourſe. For why any thing ſhould be what it is, rather than what it is not, is a queſtion which few, I think, would aſk, and none would attempt to anſwer. The attempt to aſſign

* That κοινωνειν is more than μεθεχειν. See Iamblich. de Myſt. ſect. 2. cap. V.

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a reaſon, why the Redeemer ſhould be a man, implies both that he might have been, without partaking of the human nature, and by conſequence, that in his own proper nature he was originally ſomething different from man; and that there might have been an expectation, that he would make his appearance in ſome form above the human. It particularly implies, that an expectation of his appearance in ſome higher form might be expected to prevail among the perſons, to whom this reaſon is aſſigned; ſo that the manifeſt manhood of Chriſt would be likely to be an objection with them to his claim to the character of the Meſſiah. This, Sir, ſeems to deſerve your particular attention. For the perſons, to whom the apoſtle renders theſe reaſons for the manhood of the Redeemer, were the Hebrews; the firſt Jewiſh Chriſtians; of whom you ſay, that, before their converſion at leaſt, "they had no "idea that their Meſſiah was to come down from hea-"ven *," having never been taught by their prophets to expect "any other than a man like themſelves in "that illuſtrious character †."

10. UPON the whole, ſince the phraſe of "coming "in the fleſh" muſt be more than equivalent to the word "to come;" ſince there is no evidence of its ſuppoſed paralleliſm with St. Paul's phraſe of "par-"taking of fleſh and blood;" ſince in the diſcourſe of any but an Unitarian, it muſt involve an alluſion to the incarnation and divinity of our Lord; your defence of your argument from St. John's firſt epiſtle is

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 49.

† Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 2.

inſufficient:

insufficient: the argument is still to be considered as running in a circle, and it was properly adduced as the second among my specimens of insufficient proof. LETTER FOURTH.

I am, &c.

N. B. The argument, which Dr. Prieſtley has advanced in the fifth of his Second Letters, in favour of his own interpretation of the phraſe "coming in the fleſh," from a paſſage in St. Polycarp's epiſtle, is conſidered and refuted in the Firſt of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions.

LETTER FIFTH.

The Archdeacon's interpretation of Clemens Romanus defended.—The ſhorter epiſtles of Ignatius genuine.

Dear Sir,

HAVING, to your own entire ſatisfaction, made good your argument from St. John's firſt epiſtle againſt my exceptions; you proceed to reply to the teſtimonies which I produced from Clemens Romanus, for the pre-exiſtence and divinity of our Lord. LETTER FIFTH.

2. When Clemens ſays, "our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt came not in the pomp of pride and arrogance, although he had it in his power," you ſay, that the coming alluded to was "no coming "from heaven to earth;" and that the pomp of pride and arrogance, in which our Lord came not, ſtands for an "oſtentatious diſplay" of the miraculous

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culous powers which our Lord never made*. To this it is ſufficient to reply, that my interpretation reſts upon the literal ſenſe of the holy father's words, which you ſuppoſe to be figurative; that you have nothing to object to the literal interpretation, but that it ſuits not with your own opinions; whereas I have ſomething of great importance to ſay in its defence; that it is eſtabliſhed by the context. "He "came not (ſays Clemens) in the pomp of pride "and arrogance, although he had it in his power, "but in humility, as the Holy Spirit ſpake con- "cerning him." The pomp therefore of pride and arrogance, in which our Lord came not, is that pomp, which is the proper oppoſite of the humility, in which the Holy Spirit had foretold that he ſhould come. For he came not in that, but in this he came. Now to determine what this humility is, Clemens immediately goes on to cite the prophecies, which deſcribe the Meſſiah's low condition. The humility, therefore, of an ordinary condition is that in which it is ſaid the Meſſiah came. The pomp, therefore, of a high condition is the pomp, in which it is ſaid he came not, although he had it in his power ſo to come. The expreſſions therefore clearly imply, that our Lord, 'ere he came, had the power to chooſe, in what condition he would be born.

3. In citing this paſſage of Clemens Romanus, I dealt very liberally with you; as I truſt indeed that

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 13.

I have

I have done in every part of the argument. I cited the paſſage, as it ſtands in our modern copies. More antient copies, thoſe which Jerome uſed, inſtead of καιπερ δυναμενος, " altho' he had it in his power," had καιπερ παντα δυναμενος, " altho' he hath *all things* " in his power." This appears from Jerome's tranſlation of the paſſage, which is in theſe words, " Sceptrum Dei, Dominus Jeſus Chriſtus non ve- " nit in jactantiâ ſuperbiæ, cum poſſit omnia *." Now with this emendation of the laſt clauſe, which it ſeems was an aſſertion of our Lord's omnipotence, you are welcome to make what you can of the preceding clauſe, by figurative interpretations †.

* Hieronym. in Eſaiam, cap. lii.

† Dr. Prieſtley, to whom it is a matter of equal eaſe to bring the Holy Scriptures, or the Fathers, upon all occaſions to ſpeak his own ſentiments, finds no aſſertion of our Lord's omnipotence in this clauſe of Clemens thus rendered by Jerome: nothing more than an alluſion " to the great power " of which he became poſſeſſed after the deſcent of the Spi- " rit of God upon him at his baptiſm." (See the ſecond of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters to me.) That is, to affirm that a perſon hath *all* things in his power, is, in Dr. Prieſtley's apprehenſion of the terms, to affirm that at a certain time he had *ſome* things in his power. Had any ſuch alluſion been intended to the miraculous powers, the verb *poſſit* in Jerome's Latin, ſhould have been in one or the other of the preterite tenſes. By the uſe of the preſent tenſe, Jerome deſcribes a plenitude of power now enjoyed. This plenitude of power now enjoyed, is alleged as what might have been exerciſed by our Lord in time paſt with reſpect to the manner of his own coming. It is a plenitude of power therefore

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4. No figurative interpretations will elude the force of my citations from Ignatius. But it is the particular happineſs of the Unitarian writers, that they are never found at a loſs for an expedient. All that I ſay of the repeated aſſertion of our Lord's divinity in the epiſtles of Ignatius, you allow to be true, "according to our preſent copies of his epiſtles. "But the genuineneſs of them, you ſay, is not only "very much doubted, but generally given up by "the learned*. And leſt this aſſertion ſhould want that appearance of weight, which an air of confidence gives, you even tax my ingenuity "for con-"cealing a circumſtance which, you ſay, I muſt "have known;" and you challenge me to prove theſe epiſtles, "as we now have them, to be the "genuine epiſtles of Ignatius†."

5. SIR, if the genuineneſs of theſe epiſtles be generally given up by the learned, my ignorance, not my ingenuity, is to be blamed, that I cited them as genuine. I indeed knew nothing of this general giving up. But ſince the teſtimony of Ignatius is allowed to be expreſs, if the epiſtles be genuine from which it is produced; permit me to tell you, in few words, what I know of theſe epiſtles.

therefore ever preſent to our Lord, now and in time paſt; and being allowed to be now preſent, is ſuppoſed of neceſſary conſequence to be capable of effects in time paſt. But this deſcribes nothing leſs than the attribute of omnipotence. But language is no key to "unlock the mind of a Socinian."

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 13.

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6. I KNOW that ancient writers mention ſeven epiſtles of Ignatius, written upon his journey from Antioch, where he was Biſhop, through Aſia Minor; for that way his journey lay, when he was carried to Rome, by Trajan's order, to be expoſed to wild beaſts. Of theſe epiſtles ſix are ſaid to have been addreſſed to the churches of ſix different cities; Epheſus, Magneſia upon Mæander, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna; and the ſeventh was addreſſed to Polycarp. I know, that beſides ſome other epiſtles, confeſſedly ſpurious, two editions, a longer and a ſhorter, are at this day current, of ſeven epiſtles under the name of Ignatius, inſcribed to thoſe to whom the real epiſtles of the bleſſed martyr, according to the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, were addreſſed. The longer epiſtles firſt appeared in print in an old Latin verſion, publiſhed by Father Stapulenſis in 1498; a correſponding Greek text was publiſhed by Valentine Pacæus, from a MS. in the Auguſtan Library, in the year 1557. The ſhorter edition likewiſe made its firſt appearance in print, in an old Latin verſion, publiſhed by Uſher from two MSS. in the year 1644. The Greek was publiſhed by Iſaac Voſſius in 1646, from a MS. in the Medicæan Library at Florence. The Medicæan MS. being imperfect in the end, wanted the epiſtle to the Romans. But a Greek text of this epiſtle, perfectly correſponding with Uſher's Latin verſion, was publiſhed at Paris, from a MS. of Colbert's, by Mr. Ruinard in the year 1689.

7. IT

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7. It has been made a queſtion, whether the ſhorter epiſtles are from abridged, or the longer from interpolated copies. The phraſeology of the longer ſeems in ſome parts accommodated to the Arian notions: that of the ſhorter, is every where agreeable to the Catholic faith. The ſhorter edition hath the ſuffrage of the Fathers of the five firſt centuries; their quotations, which are numerous, every where agreeing with this text. William Whiſton, a man whoſe memory is more to be eſteemed for his integrity, and the extent and variety of his reading, than for the ſoundneſs of his judgment, from pure attachment to the Arian cauſe, maintained the authority of the longer copies; but his opinion hath found but few abetters, and thoſe of inconſiderable name, even in his own party. The Preſbyterian Divines, deſirous to get rid of ſo great an authority as that of Ignatius in favour of Epiſcopacy, the rights of which are ſet very high in theſe epiſtles, were unwilling to allow their authenticity in either form. But with a majority of the Learned theſe ſeven epiſtles are received as authentic; and the ſhorter edition is ſuppoſed to exhibit the genuine text. This at leaſt was the opinion of Iſaac Voſſius, Uſher, Hammond, Petavius, Grotius, Pearſon, Bull, Cave, Wake, Cotelerius, Grabe, Dupin, Tillemont, Le Clerc. On the other ſide ſtand no names to be compared with theſe, except the three of Salmaſius, Blondel, and Dallæus. Perhaps you will add that of Bochart. But the great Bochart's doubts went to one only of the ſeven*; the epiſtle to the Romans; and they

* Herozoic. P. I. lib. iii. cap. 8.

are

are founded on a chronology of the word *Leopardus*, which Pearſon hath proved to be erroneous *.

8. MOSHEIM holds a middle opinion. The queſtion of preference between the two editions he thinks undecided. Whichever edition be preferred, he thinks the ſuſpicion of interpolation and corruption cannot be entirely removed. That theſe epiſtles are of great antiquity, he thinks certain. That they are not altogether forgeries, ſo credible that nothing can be more. But how far they are ſincere, he takes to be a knot which cannot be untied†. At the ſame time he allows, what with me entirely overturns his ſingular opinion, that the authenticity of them would never have been called in queſtion, had they not contained, what the advocates of Epiſcopacy knew how to turn to the advantage of their cauſe; which when the Preſbyterians and others, who were for aboliſhing the privileges of the Clergy, underſtood, they attacked them with a warmth, by which they more harmed their own reputation than the authenticity of thoſe writings‡. It is true, he taxes the writers on the other ſide, but not ſo generally, with no leſs intemperance. But, in my judgement, the authenticity of antient writings muſt be ſet very high, which could never have been brought in queſtion but thro' prejudice.

* Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, P. II. p. 91——94.

† De Rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum, p. 161.

‡ Ibid. p. 165.

9. WITH

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9. WITH this preponderance therefore of authorities on the ſide of the epiſtles, and with this confeſſion of Moſheim againſt his own opinion, I ſhall take the liberty to appeal to them, as they ſtand in the ſhorter edition, as the genuine writings of the bleſſed martyr: not free indeed from thoſe blemiſhes, which ariſe from the haſte, the careleſſneſs, and the ignorance of tranſcribers; but upon the whole not leſs ſincere, than moſt other pieces of the ſame antiquity. I ſhall appeal to them with the leſs ſcruple, foraſmuch as the ſame ſincerity, which I aſcribe to them, and which is quite ſufficient for my purpoſe, is allowed by the learned and the candid Lardner; whoſe judgement muſt have been biaſſed by his opinions in prejudice of theſe writings, if any thing could have biaſſed his judgement in prejudice of the evidence of truth. After ſuggeſting in no very confident language, that "even the ſmaller epiſtles may have been tampered with "by the Arians, or the Orthodox, or both;" he adds, "I do not affirm, that there are in them any conſidera- "ble corruptions or alterations*." If no conſiderable corruptions or alterations, certainly none reſpecting a point of ſuch importance as the original nature of Chriſt. I will therefore ſtill appeal to theſe epiſtles, as ſufficiently ſincere to be deciſive upon the point in diſpute. Nor ſhall I think myſelf obliged to go into the proof of their authenticity, till you have given a

* Theſe words of Dr. Lardner are cited by Dr. Prieſtley himſelf in his Reply to the Animadverſions in the Monthly Review of June, 1783, p. 36. They make a part of his proof that theſe epiſtles are ſo corrupted, as not to be quoted with ſafety. See Reply to Animadverſions, p. 35.

ſatisfactory

satisfactory reply to every part of Bishop Pearson's elaborate defence: a work, which I suspect you have not yet *looked through*. LETTER FIFTH.

I am, &c.

P. S. To the authorities for the epistles of Ignatius, according to the shorter copies, I must add Fabricius.

LETTER SIXTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Second.—The difference of the Ebionites and Nazarenes no singular or new opinion of the Archdeacon's.—The same thing maintained by Mosheim and other Critics of great name.—Dr. Priestley's arguments from Origen and Eusebius not neglected in the Archdeacon's Charge.—Dr. Priestley's conclusions from the several passages cited by him from Epiphanius confuted.—The Nazarenes no sect of the apostolic age.—Ebion not contemporary with St. John.—The antiquity of a sect not a proof of its orthodoxy.

DEAR SIR,

THE Citadel of your strength is the argument from the Nazarenes; to which however I have given a place among my specimens of insufficient proof, LETTER SIXTH.

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proofs. You find the attack upon this fortreſs warm on every ſide; and your reſiſtance is proportionably vigorous. So impatient are you for its defence, that you take it out of its turn, paſſing by my third ſpecimen, the argument from Athanaſius; which you very properly conſider as an outwork, which will be indeed of little conſequence, if the citadel ſhould ſurrender—which however muſt be the caſe; neither force nor ſtratagem can defend it.

2. Two points, you know, muſt be made out to ſave this argument; the one, that the faith of the Nazarenes was Unitarian; the other, that theſe Unitarian Nazarenes were the Hebrew Chriſtians, or the members of the primitive church of Jeruſalem. To prove the firſt point you abide by your original aſſertion, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were one and the ſame people under different names. This aſſertion you attempt to defend againſt my objections. We ſhall ſee with what ſucceſs.

3. You allow "it has been imagined by ſome, that there "was a difference between the doctrine "of the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, concerning "the perſon of Chriſt*." Something of a difference, ſome half-witted critics have, it ſeems, *imagined*. But you take care to inſinuate in the next ſentence, that none before me ever dreamed of ſo wide a difference, as I would put between them. It had only been imagined "that the Ebionites diſbelieved, while "the Nazarenes maintained, the miraculous con-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14.

ception †;"

" ception*;" both concurring in the diſbelief of our Lord's divinity. " For as to any Nazarenes, who " believed that Chriſt was any thing more than man, " you find no trace of them in hiſtory†." And you think it extraordinary, " that it ſhould now be made " a point to find ſome difference between the Naza- " renes and the Ebionites, inaſmuch as you believe " no critic of any name in the laſt age pretended to " find any‡." Indeed, you may well be aſtoniſhed. For " the learned Jeremiah Jones‖" wrote a chapter to prove them the ſame people.

4. Indeed, Sir, I muſt take ſhame to myſelf, and confeſs, that this learned Jeremiah Jones is not of my acquaintance. I find upon enquiry, that he is very much unknown among my brethren of the eſtabliſhment. I am informed, however, that he was not undeſerving of the epithet which you have coupled with his name. He was, it ſeems, the tutor of the venerable Lardner, and was thought in natural ability to excell his pupil. Nevertheleſs, Sir, I conceive I may be pardoned, if I preſume to diſſent from the opinion of Jeremiah Jones, notwithſtanding the importance that may have accrued to it from the approbation of Dr. Prieſtley. That, Sir, which you are pleaſed to call an imagination of ſome, the notion of a difference between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, was the decided opinion of a writer better known than Jeremiah

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14. † Ibid.
‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 23. ‖ Ibid.

Jones,

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Jones, the illuſtrious Moſheim. "This little body "of Chriſtians, ſays that learned hiſtorian, which "coupled Moſes with Chriſt, ſplit again into two "ſects, diſtinguiſhed from each other by their doc- "trines concerning Chriſt, and the permanent obli- "gation of the law, and perhaps by other circum- "ſtances*." As a certain proof that they were two diſtinct ſects, he obſerves that each had its own goſpel. He ſays, that "the Nazarenes had a better "and truer notion of Chriſt than the Ebionites†."

5. It may be Moſheim was the inventor of this diſtinction, ſince you have not found it in any critic of any name of the laſt age. Perhaps, Sir, you and I, when we ſpeak of critics of any name, may not always agree in the perſons, to whom we would apply that deſcription. May I then take leave to aſk, what you think of Hugo Grotius? Was He a critic of any name? Voſſius, Spencer, Huetius, were theſe critics of any name? If they were, Sir, you muſt come again to your confeſſions. For Hugo Grotius, Voſſius, Spencer, and Huetius ‡ agree that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, though ſometimes confounded, were diſ-

* Puſillum veró hoc Chriſtianorum agmen, quod Moſen Chriſto ſociabat, in duas iterum diſſiliebat ſectas; dogmatibus de Chriſto, legiſque neceſſitate, forté aliis etiam rebus ſejunctas. *Moſheim de Rebus Chriſtianorum anté Conſtantinum*, Sæc. 2. § xxxix.

† Nazarei nimirum et de Chriſto multo rectius et verius ſentiebant quám Ebionei. Ibid. n. * * *.

‡ Grotius in Matth. c. I. Voſſius de genere Jeſu Chriſti cap. II. § 1. Spencer in Origen contra Celſum, ad p. 56. Huetius in Origenis commentaria, p. 74.

tinct

tinct ſects; and they maintain the opinion, which I now maintain, of the high orthodoxy of the proper Nazarenes in the article of our Lord's divinity.

6. But it may be that the Nazarenes were Unitarian, tho' they were not Ebionites. For the doctrine concerning our Lord's divinity is not the only point, in which the pretended difference is placed: and "as "to any Nazarenes, who believed that Chriſt was "any thing more than man, you find no trace of them "in hiſtory*." You have then been leſs ſucceſsful than Hugo Grotius, Voſſius, Spencer, and Huetius: not to mention others of inferior note.

7. You ſee, Sir,—our readers at leaſt will ſee—that you had little ground to repreſent the opinion, which I maintain, of a difference between the Nazarenes and Ebionites, as ſingular or novel. Your attempt to ſet it forth in that light I cannot but conſider as a ſtratagem, which you were willing to employ for the preſervation of your battered citadel, the argument from the Nazarenes. In this ſtratagem, if I miſtake not, you are completely foiled. In your ſallies againſt the batteries which I have raiſed, I truſt you will be little more ſucceſsful. But as too much of ſtratagem is apt to mix itſelf with all your operations, it will be neceſſary that I watch very narrowly the manner of your approaches.

8. Your reply to my objections againſt the teſtimony, which Epiphanius is ſuppoſed to bear to the

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14.

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identity of the two ſects, is opened with a complaint, that I have ſaid nothing " to the arguments from " Origen and Euſebius*." Sir, either here is more ſtratagem, or you have dealt by me, as you profeſs to do by the anti-nts. You have only looked through my charge. Had you redde it through, you could hardly have miſſed ſomething that I ſay to the arguments from Origen and Euſebius. I flatly deny any direct teſtimony of Origen, in favour of the identity which you would prove; and I have ſhewn that the paſſages, from which you would draw the inference, are little to your purpoſe†." The argument from Euſebius, you will be pleaſed to recollect, made no part of your ori-inal proof. It firſt appeared among certain co rections and additions, which are annexed to your *Reply to the Animadverſions* of a learned writer in the Monthly Review. It was impoſſible therefore that I ſhould take notice of it in my Charge, which had been ſent to the preſs, and was in great part printed, before I had any knowledge of the Reply, or indeed of the Animadv rſions which occaſioned it. But in the appendix to my Charge, which was written after I had redde your Reply, and in conſequence of it, I complained, that you had made no reference to the particular paſſages of Euſebius, upon which you would found your argument‡.

9. HOWEVER, that I ſaid ſomething very material to the argument from Epiphanius, you deny not. I

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 14.

† Charge I. § 15, and Appendix, § 1.

‡ Appendix to Charge, § 2.

ſaid

ſaid indeed that no man could allege, as you do, the teſtimony of Epiphanius to the identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, who had redde to the end ſo much as the firſt ſentence of Epiphanius's account of the Ebionites. And I ſtill ſay the ſame thing. For in that firſt ſentence Epiphanius aſſerts, that Ebion made additions to the doctrine of the Nazarenes. Among theſe additions I place, although you will not, the meer humanity of Chriſt.

10. You tell me in reply, that if I had myſelf redde the ſecond paragraph of this ſame chapter of Epiphanius, it would have ſhewn me the error of my own remark; for in that ſecond paragraph, you ſay it appears, that the difference between the Ebionites and the Nazarenes lay in other particulars, not in the doctrine of the meer humanity of Chriſt*. You then produce that paragraph, with a ſtring of other paſſages confirming, as you think, the aſſertion, which you pretend to find in it, of the agreement of the two ſects upon the point in queſtion. Epiphanius tells us, as you think, in the ſecond paragraph of his firſt ſection about the Ebionites, "that Ebion borrowed his abo-"minable rites (ſo you render βδελυρον) from the Sa-"maritans; his opinion (γνωμην) from the Nazare-"nes; his name from the Jews." In the ſecond ſection, as you underſtand him, he places the whole difference between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites in a ſingle circumſtance, totally unconnected with the opinions about Chriſt. In the ſame ſection, you ſay, he ſpeaks of the two ſects as inhabiting the ſaid country,

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 15—17.

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and adds, that " agreeing together they communi- " cated of their perverſeneſs to each other*."

11. Now, Sir, in theſe quotations, I have to complain partly of the want of critical diſcernment; partly of ſtratagem; partly of unſkilful interpretation; and I affirm, that not one of the paſſages alleged is to your purpoſe.

12. For the ſecond paragraph of the firſt ſection, the only clauſe in it of which you can avail yourſelf, is that in which it is aſſerted, according to your tranſlation, that " Ebion took——his opinion from the " Nazarenes†." But here, Sir, is ſtratagem. Why is not the entire clauſe produced? Becauſe the entire clauſe would defeat the concluſion, which it is brought to eſtabliſh. Does Epiphanius ſay, that Ebion took his opinion ſimply from the Nazarenes? He ſays it not; even if it be admitted, that the word γνωμην is rightly rendered by *Opinion*. If *Opinion* be indeed what is here ſignified by γνωμην, Epiphanius ſays, that Ebion took his opinion from " the Oſſæ- " ans, the Nazoræans, and the Naſaræans." The Nazoræans of Epiphanius (Ναζωραιοι) were the Chriſtian Nazarenes. But his Naſaræans were no Chriſtians. They were a Jewiſh ſect; one of the ſeven which were ſubſiſting at the time of our Lord's appearance; the fifth in Epiphanius's enumeration. The Oſſæans were the ſixth of thoſe ſeven ſects of Judaiſm. So that if any thing is aſſerted in this clauſe concerning the opinions of Ebion, it is that

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 15. † Ibid.

they

they were a mixture of the extravagancies of three ſects; two Jewiſh, and one Chriſtian. But this general aſſertion will never determine, to which of theſe three ſources any particular opinion, maintained by Ebion, is to be referred. It will be probable, that his doctrine of our Lord's humanity was an accommodation of the old doctrine of the Nazarenes to the prejudices of his Jewiſh friends. For how will you prove, Sir, that Ebion, if he taught the ſame opinions which you now maintain, was not actuated by the ſame generous motives: a tender charity for the Jews, whom he might propoſe, as you do, to reconcile to the Evangelic doctrine, by diveſting the doctrine of every thing properly Evangelic?

13. BUT I contend further, that the word γνωμην, in this paſſage of Epiphanius, is not rightly rendered by *opinion*. It often indeed denotes *opinion* in good Greek writers: but it is not uſed in that ſenſe here. That it is not, appears from the ſubſequent part of the ſame ſentence; in which γνωμη is mentioned as ſomething diſtinct from γνωσις and συγκαταθεσις των ευαγγελιων (perhaps we ſhould read ευαγγελιστων) και αποστολων περι πιστεως. "Ebion, ſays Epiphanius, "deſired to bear the appellation of a Chriſtian, but "not to adopt the practice of Chriſtians, nor their "γνωμη, nor their knowledge, nor their aſſent to the "Evangeliſts and Apoſtles concerning the faith *."

* Χριστιανων βουλεται εχειν την προσηγοριαν, ὁ γαρ ὀπισθεν τηντε πραξιν, και την γνωμην, και την γνωσιν, και την των ευαγγελιων και αποστολων περι πιστεως συγκαταθεσιν.

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Now knowledge and aſſent concerning faith to the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles include religious opinion: γνωμη, therefore, being mentioned as diſtinct from theſe, is not opinion. It ſeems to be rather uſed here, for what is expreſſed in Engliſh by the word *ſentiment*; a thing which often modifies opinion, but itſelf is not opinion. Of this uſe of the word examples are not wanting. " Ebion, it is ſaid, " poſſeſſed the ſentiments of Oſſæans, Naza- " renes, and Naſaræans." He reſembled theſe Chriſtian and Jewiſh ſectaries, in that illiberality of ſentiment, which inclined the Nazarenes to think the obſervance of the ritual law neceſſary to a Chriſtian's ſalvation, and diſpoſed the Oſſæans and the Nazaræans to many ſenſeleſs ſuperſtitions. But this reſemblance is no proof, that he took his opinion of the meer humanity of Chriſt from the Chriſtian Nazarenes.

14. BUT if this paſſage is not ſufficiently explicit, the ſecond ſection you will tell me is deciſive. Unfortunately the long paſſage, which you have produced from this ſection, wants to be ſet in order before any uſe can be made of it: and when we have made the beſt of the preſent text, which I fear is too corrupt to be perfectly reſtored without MSS. it will little ſerve your purpoſe. Much indeed of the confuſion ariſes from a falſe punctuation, which your own tranſlation ſets in a moſt conſpicuous light, as a little remark which you have thrown in, points out the correction of it. " —— and firſt, he aſ- " ſerted that Chriſt was born of the commerce and " ſeed

" ſeed of a man, namely Joſeph, *as we ſignified* " *above* *." This aſſertion of Ebion's had not been ſignified above: it is mentioned in this paſſage for the firſt time. You remark, that theſe words, " as we ſignified above," refer to the firſt words of the firſt ſection *. But in the firſt words of the firſt ſection we have no ſignification of Ebion's denial of the miraculous conception, nor in any words previous to this clauſe of the ſecond ſection: and the reference cannot be to previous words, for that which no previous words contain. The reference therefore, which is explicitly to ſomething previous, can have no connection with the denial of the miraculous conception, which is now mentioned for the firſt time. It muſt connect however with ſomething in the writer's preſent narrative, or it hath no meaning. Now in the words which immediately precede the clauſe, which regards Ebion's heterodoxy upon the article of the conception, that is in the initial clauſes of this ſection, Epiphanius actually repeats what he had ſaid before. With theſe clauſes therefore this reference to the former part of his narrative is to be connected; and the intervening clauſe, regarding the conception, ſhould be ſet out as a parentheſis. I will now preſent you with the Greek text properly pointed, accompanied with two tranſlations; your own on one ſide, and mine upon the other; that our readers, comparing both with the original, may judge for themſelves of the propriety of each.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 16.

Dr. Priestley.

——he was cotemporary with the former, and had the ſame origin with them; and firſt he aſſerted, that Chriſt was born of the commerce and ſeed of a man, namely Joſeph, as we ſignified above, [referring to the firſt words of his firſt ſection] when we ſaid, that in other reſpects he agreed with them all, and differed from them only in this, viz. in his adherence to the laws of the Jews, with reſpect to the ſabbath, circumciſion, and other things that were enjoined by the Jews and the Samaritans. He moreover adopted many more things than the Jews, in imitation of the Samaritans.

Οὗτος γαρ ὁ Εβιων συγχρονος μεν τουτων ὑπηρχεν, ἀπ' ἀυτων δε συν ἀυτοις ὁρμαται· τα πρωτα δε ἐκ παραλληλης καὶ σπερματος ἀνδρος, τουτεστι τυ Ιωσηφ, τον Χριστον γεγενησθαι ἐλεγεν· ὡς καὶ ἠδη ἡμιν προειρηται. ὁτι τα ἰσα τοις ἀλλοις ἐν ἁπασι φρονων, ἐν τουτῳ μονῳ διεφερεν· ἐν τῳ τῳ νομῳ τυ Ιουδαϊσμυ προσανεχειν, καὶ α περιτομην, καὶ καὶ την περιτομην, καὶ καὶ τα ἀλλα παντα ὁσαπερ παρα Ιουδαιοις καὶ Σαμαρειταις ἐπιτελειται. ἐτι δε πλειω ἐστος, παρα τυς Ιουδαιους, ὁμοιως τοις Σαμαρειταις διαπραττεται.

Dr. Horsley.

For this Ebion was contemporary with theſe, and he ſets out from the ſame principles with them (but firſt of all he aſſerted, that Chriſt was begotten of the commerce and ſeed of a man, namely Joſeph) as hath been already related by us. For agreeing with other [heretics] in all things [elſe] he differed in this ſingle point, in that he adhered to the Judaic law with reſpect to the obſervation of the ſabbaths, and to circumciſion, and to all other things which are common to the rites of the Jews and the Samaritans. And beſides, he is punctual in many things, not regarded by the Jews, in conformity with the Samaritans.

15. THE manner in which Ebion's opinion concerning the conception of our Lord is mentioned, in parentheſis, ſeems to exclude it from thoſe principles, which he borrowed from other ſectaries. If thoſe other ſectaries therefore were the Nazarenes, then this opinion, as it ſhould ſeem, was no principle with them; and this paſſage, like moſt of your quotations, contradicts what you have brought it up to prove.

16. YOU will perhaps object, that if Epiphanius meant to inſinuate, that Ebion and the Nazarenes held different opinions about Chriſt; he would not have named another thing as the ſingle point in which they differed. Nor hath he done this. Having deſcribed Ebion's doctrine as a compilation of the extravagancies of other ſects, he ſays, he differed only in a ſingle point. That is, there was but a ſingle point in his whole ſyſtem, in which he differed from *all* the ſects from which he borrowed: which was this, that his Judaiſm was of the Samaritan caſt. But it follows not from this, that whatever he maintained beſides was to be found in the doctrines of the Nazarenes, or of any other in particular of the various hereſies of which the Ebionæan was compoſed.

17. BUT, to deal ſincerely, I muſt confeſs, that it is not at all clear to me, that the Nazarenes are the ſect intended, in the beginning of this ſection, under the deſcription of Ebion's contemporaries, from

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from whom he borrowed his principles. If they were not; this ſection will neither afford any proof of your opinion, nor be concluſive on the other ſide. The perſons intended are not named, otherwiſe than by the pronoun τέλων: and for this pronoun, if you examine the original text, you will be much at a loſs to find an antecedent. This pronoun uſed as it is here, as a relative, is generally to be referred to the perſons mentioned laſt before in the author's diſcourſe. But in all the preceding part of this diſcourſe about the Ebionites, the Nazarenes are no where mentioned, except in that ſentence in which they are joined with the Oſſæans and the Naſaræans, and at the very beginning of the chapter, where they are intended by this ſame pronoun as the ſect deſcribed in the chapter next preceding. The perſons laſt mentioned in the preſent diſcourſe are the Jews and the Samaritans: and of theſe the pronoun τέλων may be redditive. Ebion might be called their contemporary, if he lived before the Jews intirely loſt their conſideration in the world, as a religious ſect; and while the Samaritans were yet ſubſiſting as a diſtinct ſet of Judaiſm. He ſet out from the ſame principles with them, becauſe he maintained the permanent obligation of the ritual law. If this be the true expoſition of the two firſt clauſes of this ſection; it is the purport of the parentheſis, which follows them, to remark, that Ebion, even in that part of his doctrine which could not be borrowed either from Jews or Samaritans, carried his deſire of accommodating to Jewiſh principles ſuch a length, as to acknowledge our Lord for nothing more than a preacher of righteouſneſs.

righteouſneſs. But this leads to no concluſion about the faith of the Nazarenes.

18. I HAVE ſometimes thought, that the pronoun τῶν might be redditive, not of the Nazarenes ſingly, but of all the ſects which are mentioned in the preceding part of the narrative, as furniſhing the conſtituent parts of Ebion's ſyſtem; namely, of the Jews, the Samaritans, the Oſſæans, the Naſaræans, the Nazarenes, the Cerinthians, and the Carpocratians. With all theſe, according to the confuſed chronology of this inaccurate writer, Ebion, as a junior with an elder, was contemporary: and he ſet out from the ſame principles with them; inaſmuch as all his principles were borrowed, ſome from one of theſe ſects, ſome from another; the only thing which was peculiar to himſelf being this; that the Judaiſm, which he practiſed, was of the Samaritan caſt. In this expoſition of the pronoun τῶν, the importance of the parentheſis muſt be to ſignify, that the meer humanity of Chriſt was made a principle by Ebion, although it was no principle with thoſe from whom he borrowed. It was indeed a part of the Cerinthian doctrine, not as a principle, but as a conſequence from principles. The principles of the Cerinthian doctrine were the principles of the Oriental philoſophy: and the denial of our Lord's divinity, and of his miraculous conception, in the ſyſtem of Cerinthus was a conſequence of that cardinal principle of the Oriental philoſophy, which put eternal enmity between God and every thing material. But with Ebion the denial of the miraculous

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culous conception was itſelf a firſt principle, independent of every thing elſe. In this view of it again the parentheſis leads to no concluſion concerning the Nazarenes.

19. WHICH expoſition of the pronoun τῶν is to be preferred, is a point upon which I can bring myſelf to no fixed opinion. I very much ſuſpect, as I have already obſerved, ſome conſiderable corruption of the text. For, although Epiphanius is indeed a wretched writer, the obſcurity of this ſentence, as it ſtands, is more than meer bad writing is apt to create. But expound the pronoun as you pleaſe the paſſage will be either againſt you, or at the beſt nothing to your purpoſe.

20. BUT in a ſubſequent ſentence, Epiphanius ſpeaks, it ſeems, " of the Ebionites as inhabiting the " ſame country as the Nazarenes;" and adds, " that " *agreeing together they communicated of their perverſe-* " *neſs to each other.*" It is true, that in the paſſage which you have produced Epiphanius ſpeaks of the Ebionites as the near neighbours of certain Nazarenes, and of a reſemblance which the vicinity of ſituation produced. But the Nazarenes intended, were they the Chriſtian Nazarenes, or the Naſaræan Jews? They are called " the lawleſs Nazarenes" [Ναζαρηνοι οἱ ἀνομοι]. The Chriſtian Nazarenes had nothing in their conduct, that might render them deſerving of this epithet. Their error was, that they feared to uſe their liberty, not that they abuſed it. The Naſaræan Jews, as Jews, were lawleſs in a very emphatic ſenſe;

ſenſe; inaſmuch as they renounced the whole of the Moſaic law, except that they circumciſed, kept the Sabbath, and paid ſome regard to the ſtated feſtivals. It was not, that they denied the authority of Moſes; but, by what may be gathered from Epiphanius's account of them, they pretended that the real laws of Moſes were loſt, and that the Pentateuch of the Jews was, in all but the hiſtorical parts, a ſpurious work*. Upon theſe principles they held themſelves releaſed from all rites, but thoſe which the hiſtory itſelf confirmed. This ſect was found chiefly in the region of Baſanitis: and in a town called Cochaba, in the ſame region, Epiphanius places the original reſidence of Ebion. Theſe Nazaræans therefore were neighbours of the Ebionites, and they ſeem to be the people intended in this paſſage.

21. It may perhaps ſeem ſtrange, that any reſemblance ſhould be pretended, between a Chriſtian ſect which adhered to the Moſaic law, and a Jewiſh ſect which rejected it. But the firſt Ebionites, if Epiphanius is to be truſted in his deſcription of them, retained nothing more of genuine Judaiſm than the Naſaræans. Whatever more they had which looked like Judaiſm, it was borrowed from the Samaritan ſuperſtition.

* This conjecture, which I formed from Epiphanius's account of this ſect, I have ſince found confirmed by Damaſcenus; who ſays that they held the Pentateuch of the Jews to be a ſpurious work, and pretended to have the original in their own hands. Τας δε της πενταλευχυ γραφας ουκ εἶναι Μωσεως δογματιζουσι, ἀλλας δε παρ' ἀυτας διαβεβαιουνται. Joan. Damaſcen. de Hæreſibus.

22. But

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22. BUT whoever theſe lawleſs Nazarenes might be, their agreement with the Ebionites, is an addition of your own, founded on a miſinterpretation of the original. Epiphanius anſwers for nothing more than ſome general reſemblance. His words are to this effect. "From hence he began to propagate his pernicious doctrine; namely, from the ſame parts "which it hath before been ſaid thoſe lawleſs Nazarenes inhabited. For being contiguous, he to them, "and they to him, each imparted to the other of his "own particular impiety. And yet in certain things "they differ; but in evil diſpoſition they were counterparts one to the other *." What you took for agreement is contiguity of ſituation; and the reſemblance comes at laſt to nothing more, than an undefined general reſemblance, with ſpecific differences. An entire likeneſs is not pretended in any circumſtance but the common depravity of diſpoſition.

23. To theſe paſſages from the chapter about the Ebionites you ſubjoin another, from the 7th ſection of the preceding chapter, which treats of the Nazarenes. "He ſays, that they were Jews in all reſpects, except "that they believed in Chriſt; *but I do not know, whether they hold the miraculous conception or not* †."

* Ενθεν ἀρχεται της κακης ἀυτȣ διδασκαλιας, ὁθεν δηθεν καὶ Ναζαρηνοι οἱ ἀνομοι προδεδηλωνται. Συναφθεις γαρ, ȣ̓τος ἐκεινοις καὶ εκεινοι τȣτῳ, ἑκατερος ἀπο της ἑαυτȣ μοχθηριας τῳ ἑτερῳ μετεδωκε. καὶ διαφερονται μεν ἑτερος προς τον ἑτερον κατα τι, ἐν δε τῃ κακονοιᾳ ἀλληλȣς ἀπεμαξαντο.

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 17.

This

This you ſay, " amounts to no more than a doubt, " which he afterwards abandoned, by aſſerting that " the Ebionites held the ſame opinion concerning " Chriſt with the Nazarenes; which opinion he ex- " preſly ſtates to be their belief, that Jeſus was a meer " man, and the ſon of Joſeph *." I lament, Sir, that, in juſtice to my own cauſe, I muſt here openly complain of the perverſeneſs of your tranſlation. When you cite an antient author, why will you make him ſay more or leſs, than he hath ſaid for himſelf? Why not tranſlate literally? that your readers might ſee, how far your account of things is ſupported by expreſs teſtimony, how far it is meer inference; and be enabled to eſtimate the degree of probability, with which each inference is accompanied. " ——they be- " lieved in Chriſt; but I do not know, whether they " held the miraculous conception or not." Is this a tranſlation of the words of Epiphanius? It is not. It is an artful ſubſtitution of an inference of your own, from the author's words, for the words of the author. I, Sir, in my Charge had furniſhed you with a more exact tranſlation†. Why would you not adopt it; unleſs you could have made a better of your own, or could have ſhewn its impropriety? " Concerning Chriſt, " ſays Epiphanius, I cannot ſay with certainty [or, I " am not informed to ſay, ἐκ οἶδα εἰπειν] whether they " too, carried away with the impiety of the aforemen- " tioned Cerinthus and Merinthus, think him a meer " man; or affirm, as the truth is, that he was be- " gotten of Mary by the Holy Ghoſt." To affirm,

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 17. † Charge I. § 10.

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" as the truth is, that Chriſt was begotten of Mary by " the Holy Ghoſt," in Epiphanius's ſenſe of thoſe words, was to affirm much more than the miraculous conception, in any ſenſe in which an Unitarian might affirm it. It was to affirm our Lord's divinity. Epiphanius's confeſſion, that he had no ground to aſſert, that the Nazarenes held the contrary opinion, amounts to much more than a doubt. It amounts to an unwilling confeſſion of a baſe accuſer; who had not the liberality to abſolve in explicit terms, when he found himſelf unable to convict. As you have not yet produced the paſſage, in which Epiphanius aſſerts, that the Nazarenes and Ebionites held one opinion concerning Chriſt; your aſſertion, that he afterwards abandoned this doubt, or this acknowledgment, is deſtitute of proof; and it is the fair concluſion from this paſſage of Epiphanius, that the Nazarenes were orthodox in their opinions concerning Chriſt. This I ſhewed at large in my Charge*. You now attempt to elude my argument, by ſetting up an unfair and ſophiſticated tranſlation of the paſſage, upon which my reaſoning was founded †.

24. WERE

* I. § 10, 11.

† In the third of his Second Letters to me, Dr. Prieſtley has produced a paſſage from another part of Epiphanius's work, his chapter againſt the Arians, which clearly proves that the Ebionites and the Nazarenes, in the judgment of that writer, were different ſects; in as much as both are ſeparately mentioned. Dr. Prieſtley perhaps may ſay, that whatever diſtinction this paſſage may prove between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, upon the whole of their doctrine; it clearly proves that

24. WERE the identity of the Nazarenes and Ebionites clearly eſtabliſhed, ſtill you could turn it to no advantage, without making good your other aſſertion, that the Nazarenes were originally the very ſame with the Hebrew Chriſtians, or the members of the Primitive Church of Jeruſalem. But of this I cannot find

that they held one opinion concerning Chriſt, which is ſufficient for his purpoſe. It muſt be acknowledged, that, in this paſſage, the Nazarenes are mentioned together with the Ebionites, as ſects in error in their opinions about Chriſt, and confuted by the beginning of St. John's Goſpel; ſtill I maintain, that, in that part of his work where he profeſſedly treats of the hereſy of the Nazarenes, Epiphanius expreſſes a doubt of their heterodoxy upon the article of our Lord's Divinity, in ſuch terms as ought to leave no doubt upon the mind of his reader of their orthodoxy in that particular. And what he ſays of them, when they are only incidentally mentioned, ought to have much leſs weight than what he ſays, or ſhews himſelf averſe to ſay, in that part of his work where the errors of that ſect are the immediate ſubject.

Dr. Prieſtley, allowing Epiphanius to have been "in ſome "things weak enough," exults however in the teſtimony which, in his chapter againſt the Arians, he bears againſt the Nazarenes as a ſect, which, together with the Ebionites, "held the doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt." And he ſays, that in this Epiphanius "ſtands uncontradicted by "any authority whatever." Dr. Prieſtley is miſtaken; raſhly venturing to aſſert, that where no authority is known to him, none is extant. Epiphanius is in this contradicted, not only by himſelf, as I have already ſhewn, but by a writer of far ſuperior credit; by Joannes Damaſcenus, who, in his book *De Hæreſibus*, ſays expreſsly, that the Nazarenes confeſſed Jeſus to be the Son of God. Damaſcenus would not have ſaid of Dr. Prieſtley, or of any one maintaining the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, that he confeſſes Jeſus to be the Son of God.

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that you have brought a ſhadow of a proof, except what you pretend to derive from the teſtimony of Origen; which I ſhall conſider in my next letter. You talk indeed of the antiquity of the Nazarenes. You bid me obſerve, " that they were prior to Ebion*." Of whom you ſay, that " he was himſelf co-tempo- " rary with the apoſtle John †." And you tell me, that in allowing that the " Jewiſh Chriſtians were diſ- " tinguiſhed by the name of Nazarenes ——— " from the time that they were ſettled in the country " beyond the ſea of Galilee, I carry the opinions of " the Ebionites, as univerſally held by the Jewiſh " Chriſtians, to the very age of the Apoſtles ‡." When you do me the honour to argue from my conceſſions, I wiſh, Sir, you would report them with more fidelity and exactneſs. I have allowed no ſuch antiquity to the Nazarenes, as you would claim for them upon the ground of my conceſſions. I ſaid not, that the Jewiſh Chriſtians were diſtinguiſhed by the name of Nazarenes, from the time when the firſt ſettlements were made beyond the ſea of Galilee. I ſaid, that the ſect of the Nazarenes firſt aroſe when thoſe of the Jewiſh Chriſtians, who pertinaciouſly retained their Judaiſm, made their final ſettlement in thoſe parts, in conſequence of Adrian's ſevere edicts, by which the Jews were baniſhed from the antient ſite of Jeruſalem and the adjacent region. Thus I carried not the opinions of the Ebionites up to the Apoſtolic age: but I fixed the riſe of a prior ſect to an epoch lit-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 18.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 21.

tle

tle earlier than the middle of the ſecond century. I maintained, that the Nazarenes at that time ſeparated from the main body of the Jewiſh Chriſtians, and appeared as a diſtinct ſect. It is not allowed by me, that from that time, or in any age of the Church, "the "whole body of the Jewiſh Chriſtians were diſtin-"guiſhed by the name of Nazarenes." If any ſuch conceſſion may ſeem to be implied in the expreſſions in which I ſpeak of the Nazarenes in my Charge (I. § 12) I diſavow it. Appealing againſt your aſſertions to the ſenſe of the learned and reverend aſſembly, which I had the honour to addreſs; I rather ſought expreſſions, which might convey the general part of an opinion common to us all, than ſuch as might more preciſely mark the particulars of my own. That the name of Nazarene was deſcriptive of a hereſy, I was confident none in that aſſembly doubted. I was not equally confident but that ſome might doubt, whether that hereſy, from the time the name was uſed, embraced not the main body of the Jewiſh Chriſtians. Whatever doubts might ſubſiſt about the extent, I was confident there could be but one opinion, in that aſſembly, about the chronology of the name. But Ebion, you ſay, was contemporary with St. John. To that circumſtance, when it is proved, I ſhall be diſpoſed to give great attention. I believe the opinion hath no foundation, but in the fooliſh ſtory told by Epiphanius of St. John and Ebion in the bath. The ſame is told by other writers of St. John and Cerinthus; and it hath altogether the air of fiction. But ſuppoſe I were to allow the higheſt antiquity to theſe Nazarenes. Suppoſe that with you I were to place them in

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the Apoſtolic age. Would this oblige me to allow, that they were the true members of the Primitive church? Had not the Apoſtolic age its ſchiſms and its hereſies? The Simonians, the Nicolaitans, the Cerinthians; were not all theſe contemporary with the Apoſtles? Were they therefore ſound members of the Church of Jeruſalem? Be pleaſed, Sir, to conſider this queſtion.

I am, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

1. EUSEBIUS, in his *Eccleſiaſtical Theology*, ſpeaks as if he thought the name *Ebionites* had been impoſed by the Apoſtles themſelves, upon thoſe who diſowned our Lord's divinity; which neceſſarily implies, that in his opinion the ſect and the name were of the Apoſtolic age. "Our Saviour's own firſt heralds, ſays "Euſebius, named thoſe Ebionites——— "who acknowledged not the godhead of the Son*." Our Saviour's own firſt heralds muſt be the preachers, it ſhould ſeem, of his own appointment; namely, the Apoſtles; and that they are the perſons intended

* Καὶ ἀυτȣ δε τȣ σωτηρος ἡμων πρωτοκηρυκες Εβιωναιȣς ὠνομαζον, ἑβραϊκῃ φωνῃ πτωχȣς την διανοιαν ἀποκαλȣντες τȣς ἑνα μεν θεον λεγοντας ἐιδεναι, καὶ τȣ σωτηρος το σωμα μη ἀρνȣμενȣς, την δε τȣ υἱȣ θεοτητα μη ἐιδοντας. Ecc. Theol. lib. 1. c. 14.

is

is the more probable, for the diſtinction which ſeems to be made between theſe *firſt heralds* and *Eccleſiaſtical Fathers*, who are afterwards mentioned. Strenuouſly as you aſſert the antiquity of the Ebionites, you have no-where, that I remember, alleged this teſtimony. You were aware perhaps, that were it good for the antiquity of the ſect, it would be equally good for the reaſon and origin of the name. For my own part I am not inclined to avail myſelf of it. I conſider it as a haſty aſſertion of a writer over zealous to overwhelm his adverſary by authorities. I mention it only to proteſt againſt any uſe, which you may hereafter be diſpoſed to make of it, in a dearth of proof of Ebion's antiquity. Should you urge me with any part of this teſtimony; I ſhall have a right to inſiſt, that you accept the whole. Should you produce it in proof, that an Unitarian ſect exiſted in the apoſtolic age; you will be obliged to allow, that it is equally a proof that the Unitarian doctrine was expreſly condemned by the Apoſtles. It will be no concern of mine to diſprove the antiquity of Ebion, however I may diſbelieve it, ſo long as the very ground of his claim ſeals his condemnation; ſo long as his pretenſions to an early exiſtence reſt on a preſumption, that he had the honour to be the object of Apoſtolical cenſure.

2. Upon the ſtory of St. John and the hæreſiarch, in the public baths at Epheſus, I paſſed judgement haſtily, when I ſpake of it as a fooliſh ſtory carrying *altogether* the air of fiction. I ought to have recol-

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lected, that Irenæus *vouches ſtrongly for ſo much of it as he relates. He even cites the teſtimony of Polycarp, in terms which may be underſtood to imply, that he was himſelf one of many, ſtill living when he wrote, who had heard the ſtory from the mouth of Polycarp. The teſtimony of Irenæus is hardly to be diſbelieved; the teſtimony of Polycarp is irreſiſtible. But the ſtory, which Irenæus relates after Polycarp, he relates of St. John and Cerinthus. It makes nothing therefore for the antiquity of Ebion. As related of him, with the addition of many improbable circumſtances not mentioned by Irenæus, it may be deemed a fiction†.

* Lib. iii. c. 3.

† Dr. Prieſtley, in the third of his Second Letters to me, to corroborate the teſtimony of Epiphanius, alleges that of Jerom; who, he ſays, "mentions the Ebionites, not only as "a ſect, but a flouriſhing ſect in the time of St John." But Jerom makes no ſuch mention of the Ebionites. He ſays that St. John wrote his Goſpel in oppoſition to Cerinthus, and other heretics, and principally the doctrine of the Ebionites (not then flouriſhing but) *tunc conſurgens*, then making its firſt appearance. This I readily allow; for what was afterwards the doctrine of the Ebionites was firſt propagated by the Cerinthian Gnoſtics.

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Continuation of Reply to Dr. Prieſtley's Second.—Of the argument from Origen.—That it reſts on two paſſages in the books againſt Celſus. The firſt miſ-interpreted by Dr. Prieſtley in a very important point.——No argument to be drawn from the two paſſages in connection.— Origen convicted of two falſe aſſertions in the firſt paſſage.—The opinions of the firſt age not to be concluded from the opinions of Origen's.

DEAR SIR,

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IN failure of all other proof of your ſuppoſed identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, you ſtill appeal to the teſtimony of Origen. You have however given a new turn to this part of your argument. Your appeal was originally* to a pretended acknowledgement of Origen's, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites were the ſame people. But being made ſenſible†, how difficult it muſt be to find an acknowledgement of this Identity, in a writer who never once names the Nazarenes; you abandon that project, and in the paſſages which were at firſt cited to eſtabliſh this ſuppoſed identity, you have at laſt the good fortune to diſcover an immediate proof of your

* Hiſtory of Corruption, Vol. I. p. 7.

† See the Monthly Review for June 1783, and for September 1783.

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main propoſition, that the primitive faith of the Hebrew Church was Unitarian. Your method is to trace from Origen the faith of the Jewiſh Chriſtians in his age, and from their faith to infer that of their anceſtors.

2. THE ſtrength of this argument lies in two paſſages in the books againſt Celſus; which are very diſtant from each other, for the one is in the ſecond, the other in the fifth book; and yet they muſt be taken in connection to give any colour to your reaſoning. You ſet it off indeed to great advantage, when, appealing to the firſt of theſe paſſages, you ſay, that it appears, and that I deny not that it appears, "that "the unbelieving Jews called all thoſe of their race, "who were Chriſtians, by the name of Ebionites "in the time of Origen;" and that "Origen's own "words are too expreſs, to admit any doubt of "this*." Truly, Sir, I was not likely to deny a groundleſs aſſertion, before it was made by my antagoniſt; and you now make it for the firſt time; at leaſt I remember nothing like it in your former publications. I believe I was myſelf the firſt to bring forward this paſſage from the ſecond book againſt Celſus. In your hiſtory you have appealed to Origen's acknowledgement of the identity of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, without any reference to particular paſſages. I produced this paſſage, as of all that I could recollect the moſt for your purpoſe†. I produced it in order to ſhew, that when it is rightly un-

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 18. † Charge I. § 15.

derſtood,

derſtood, it is nothing to your purpoſe: for, altho' the Chriſtians of the circumciſion in general are in this paſſage called Ebionites; it is according to a peculiar definition of the word, which includes not what by other writers always, and by Origen himſelf in other places, is included in the notion of the Ebionæan doctrine; namely, a denial of our Lord's divinity. The Nazarenes therefore might be Ebionites, in the ſenſe which is here given to that word, altho' they doubted not our Lord's divinity, and were quite another ſet of people than the proper Ebionites. I acknowledge therefore, that in this paſſage, "Origen ſays of the Jewiſh Chriſtians of "his own time that they were Ebionites*." Theſe were my very words. But I ſaid not, that they were the unbelieving Jews, who impoſed this name upon the converted: and now that you have been pleaſed to ſay it for me, I deny it; and I maintain, that Origen's words are too expreſs to admit a doubt, that you have miſtaken his meaning. The entire paſſage of Origen† is to this effect———"they of the "Jews who believe in Chriſt have not abandoned "the law of their anceſtors; for they live according "to it; bearing a name, which correſponds with

* Charge I. § 15.

† ——Οἱ ἀπο Ιȣδαιων εἰς Ιησȣν πιςευοντες ȣ̓ καταλελοιπασι τον πατριον νομον, βιȣσι γὰρ κατ᾽ ἀυτον, ἐπωνυμοι της κατα την ἐκδοχην πτωχειας τȣ νομȣ γεγενημενοι. Εβιων τε γαρ ὁ πτωχος παρα Ιȣδαιοις καλειται, καὶ Εβιωναιοι χρηματιζȣσιν οἱ ἀπο Ιȣδαιων τον Ιησȣν ὡς Χριςον παραδεξαμενοι. Origen in Celſum, p. 56. edit. Spencer.

"the

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" the poor expectations which the law holds out*.
" For a beggar is called among the Jews [that is in
" the Hebrew language] Ebion. And they of the
" Jews who have received Jesus as the Christ, go
" by the name of Ebionæans." The converted Jews went, it is said, by this name. But where have you found that the unbelieving Jews imposed it? Not in Origen, Sir; but in the Latin translation of Gelenius. Attend to the reasons assigned by Origen for the name, and you cannot but perceive, that it could never be imposed by Jews. It was given in contempt: the objects of the contempt were observers of the Mosaic law; and the cause of the contempt was the mean opinion, which was entertained by those who gave the name, of expectations built on legal righteousness. Could these, Sir, be the sentiments of unconverted Jews?

3. It would have been a circumstance of much advantage to your argument, which I doubt not you well understand, that the unconverted Jews should have been the coiners of the name: because it would have followed, that the name was originally common to the whole body of the Hebrew Christians. Then since Origen, in the other passage in the 5th book, makes, as you observe, only two sorts of Ebionites, the one believing, the other denying the miraculous conception; the deduction might have seemed not unfair, that Origen knew of no Hebrew Christians that were not Unitarians.

* Literally, *being named after the poverty of the law in expectation.*

4. You

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4. You will ſay, perhaps, that ſince we have Origen's teſtimony for the univerſality of the name, the argument from the two paſſages, taken in connection, may ſtill proceed. If I could admit the univerſality of the name upon Origen's teſtimony; I ſhould inſiſt that his deſcription of the twofold Ebionites, in the fifth book, is not exactly what you take it to be. I ſhould remark, that the words, ὁμοιως ἡμιν, "in like "manner as we do," make an important branch of the character of the milder ſort ——— "theſe, "ſays he, are the double Ebionites; who either con-"feſs Jeſus born of a virgin, *in like manner as we do*, "or think he was not born in that manner, but "like other men*." I ſhould maintain, that the words "in like manner as we do," are equivalent to the words "as the truth is," in Epiphanius's deſcription of that belief in the miraculous conception, which he ſays the Nazarenes, for aught he knew to the contrary, might hold; and I ſhould contend, that Origen affirms, but with leſs equivocation, of theſe better Ebionites, what Epiphanius reluctantly confeſſes of the Nazarenes, that they held the Catholic doctrine concerning the nature of our Lord. And in this manner the words of Origen ſeem to have

* Εϛωσαν δε τινες καὶ τον Ιησȣν ἀποδεχομενοι, ὡς παρα τȣτο Χριϛιανοι εἰναι ἀυχȣντες, ἐτι δε κατα τον Ιȣδαιων νομον, ὡς τα Ιȣδαιων πληθη, βιȣν ἐθελοντες· ȣ̓τοι δε εισιν οἱ διττοι Εϐιωναιοι, ἠτοι ἐκ παρθενȣ ὁμολογȣντες ὁμοιως ἡμιν τον Ιησȣν, ἠ ȣ̓κ ȣ̓τω γεγενησθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς τȣς λοιπȣς ἀνθρωπȣς· τι τȣτο φερει ἐγκλημα τοις ἀπο της ἐκκλησιας; Contra Celſ. p. 272.

been

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been underſtood both by Grotius and Voſſius; when they allow, that the Nazarenes, though orthodox in this part of their faith, are included, in this paſſage of Origen's fifth book, in the appellation of Ebionites. I ſhould contend, that if the former paſſage prove the name general for the whole body of the Hebrew Chriſtians; the latter equally proves, that the notion of an Unitarian, was not neceſſarily included in it. The connection therefore of theſe two paſſages makes little for your purpoſe; ſince the ſecond ſerves but to overthrow the argument, which might be built upon the firſt. It juſtifies what I advanced in my Charge, upon a preſumption that the firſt ſingly would be made the foundation of the argument from Origen; that the word Ebionite, in Origen's time, or at leaſt in his uſe of it, had outgrown its original meaning.

5. In this manner I ſhould combat your argument from theſe two paſſages; were it not that I think too lightly of the teſtimony of Origen, in what relates to the Hebrew Chriſtians, to be ſolicitous to turn it to my own advantage. Let his words be taken as you underſtand them; and ſo far as the faith of the Hebrew Chriſtians of his own time is in queſtion, let him appear as an evidence on your ſide.—I ſhall take what you may think a bold ſtep. I ſhall tax the veracity of your witneſs—of this Origen. I ſhall tell you, that whatever may be the general credit of his character, yet in this buſineſs the particulars of his depoſition are to be little regarded, when he ſets out with the allegation of a notorious falſhood. He alleges of the Hebrew

Hebrew Chriſtians in general, that they had not renounced the Moſaic law. The aſſertion ſerved him for an anſwer to the invective, which Celſus had put in the mouth of a Jew againſt the converted Jews, as deſerters of the laws and cuſtoms of their anceſtors. The anſwer was not the worſe for wanting truth, if his Heathen antagoniſt was not ſufficiently informed in the true diſtinctions of Chriſtian ſects, to detect the falſehood. But in all the time which he ſpent in Paleſtine, had Origen never converſed with Hebrew Chriſtians of another ſort? Had he met with no Chriſtians of Hebrew families, of the church of Jeruſalem? Was the Moſaic law obſerved, was it tolerated, in Origen's days, in the church of Jeruſalem, when that church was under the government of Biſhops of the uncircumciſion? The fact is, that after the demolition of Jeruſalem by Adrian, the majority of the Hebrew Chriſtians, who muſt have paſſed for Jews with the Roman magiſtrates, had they continued to adhere to the Moſaic Law, which to this time they had obſerved more from habit than from any principle of conſcience, made no ſcruple to renounce it; that they might be qualified to partake in the valuable privileges of the Ælian Colony, from which Jews were excluded. Having thus diveſted themſelves of the form of Judaiſm, which to that time they had born, they removed from Pella, and other towns to which they had retired, and ſettled in great numbers at Ælia. The few, who retained a ſuperſtitious veneration for their law, remained in the North of Galilee, where they were joined perhaps by new fugitives of

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of the ſame weak character from Paleſtine. And this was the beginning of the ſect of the Nazarenes. But from this time, whatever Origen may pretend to ſerve a purpoſe, the majority of the Hebrew Chriſtians forſook their law, and lived in communion with the Gentile Biſhops of the new-modelled church of Jeruſalem; for the name was retained, though Jeruſalem was no more, and the ſeat of the Biſhop was at Ælia*. All this I affirm with the leſs heſitation, being ſupported by the authority of Moſheim†. From whom indeed I firſt learnt to rate the teſtimony of Origen, in this particular queſtion, at its true value‡.

6. It is in defiance therefore of the fact, and I fear of his own knowledge of the fact, that Origen affirms of the Hebrew Chriſtians in general, that they lived in the obſervance of the Moſaic Law: and it muſt be equally in defiance of the fact that he affirms, that they were all in general called Ebionites: for he pretends not, that this name generally belonged to them otherwiſe than as Judaizers. His expreſſions in the paſſage in the fifth book ſeem to imply a retractation of both theſe aſſertions. For there he ſpeaks only of *ſome*, who, with the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, retained

* See Dr. Prieſtley's objections to this repreſentation of Facts, in the Fourth of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters to me, and my Defence in my Remarks on his Second Letters. p. 2. c. ii.

† De rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum. Sæc. II. §. 38. Not. *

‡ See his Diſſertation about Ebion, which is the tenth in order in the Firſt Volume of a Collection, intitled, *Diſſertationes ad Hiſtoriam Eccleſiaſticam pertinentes.*

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the practice of Judaism. These *some* he says were the Ebionites; and, which is more, he describes these Ebionites, not indeed as universally Unitarians, but as despicable wretched heretics, whose extravagancies could bring no disgrace upon the Christian church, of which they were no part. Were the Hebrew Christians, living in communion with the Bishop of Jerusalem, in the days of Origen, no part of the true church of Christ? If they were a part of it, in Origen's own judgment they were no Ebionites. "I would not "believe this witness upon his oath," says Mosheim, "vending as he manifestly does, such flimsey "lies*."

7. I may now, Sir, without damage to my cause, freely make you a present of the whole testimony of Origen, not only as it is given by him, but as it is interpreted by you. As it is given by him, it states, that the Hebrew Christians in his time were generally Judaizers. As interpreted by you, it states, that in his time they were generally Unitarian. But if this testimony were more unexceptionable than it is, and this sense of the testimony less doubtful, what evidence would it afford, that the first Hebrew Christians were Unitarians in the time of the Apostles?

* Ego huic testi, etiamsi jurato, qui tam manifesto fumos vendit, me non crediturum esse confirmo. Mosheim de Ebione. §. x. See the veracity of Origen defended by Dr. Priestley, and further impugned by me, in the Fourth of Dr. Priestley's Second Letters to me, and in my Remarks on the Second Letters, p. 2. c. i.

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8. You pretend not, that this would follow by neceſſary conſequence. But you ſay, "if the Jewiſh "Chriſtians were univerſally Ebionites in the time of "Origen, the probability is, that they were very ge- "nerally ſo in the time of the Apoſtles*." Whence ſhould this probability ariſe? From this general maxim, it ſeems; that "whole bodies of men do not ſoon change their opinion†." You are indeed, Sir, the very laſt perſon, who might have been expected to form concluſions upon an hiſtorical queſtion from meer theory, in defiance of the experience of mankind: in defiance of the experience of our own country and our own times. How long is it, ſince the whole body of diſſenters in this kingdom (the ſingle ſect of the quakers excepted) took their ſtandard of orthodoxy from the opinions of Calvin? Where ſhall we now find a diſſenter, except perhaps among the dregs of Methodiſm, who would not think it an affront to be taken for a Calviniſt‡?

9. I now, Sir, take my leave of your argument from the Nazarenes. I truſt I have ſhewn, that, although it is the chief ſtrength of your cauſe, it was well intitled to a place among my ſpecimens of inſufficient proof, of which it was the fourth in order. Before I proceed to examine other parts of the evidence, by which you think to eſtabliſh the high an-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 21. † Ibid.

‡ Of the Numbers of the Calviniſts among the Diſſenters of the preſent day, See the Fourth of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, and my Remarks, p. 2. c. iv.

tiquity

tiquity of the Unitarian doctrine; give me leave to remind you, that, although you have overlooked it, a very positive proof is at this day extant in the world; that the Divinity of Christ was the belief of the very first Christians. This shall be the subject of my next letter.

I am, &c.

POSTSCRIPT to LETTER VII.

A LEARNED correspondent of mine, an eminent Divine of the church of Scotland, a Calvinist*, and by consequence a serious and devout believer in the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, hath remarked to me, that your assertion, that the Nazarenes were the first Hebrew Christians, might have had some colour given to it, from the history of the accusation of St. Paul before Felix, in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul was charged upon that occasion, by Tertullus the orator, as he is called, as a ringleader "*of the sect of the Nazarenes.*" Whence it might have been argued, that this was the name, which Christians in general at that time bore. This argument, I think, is far more specious, than any you have produced for yourself; but it is only an instance, by which it may be seen how easy it is, to frame arguments, in that oblique kind in which you so much delight, which may give a false colouring

* The person meant was my maternal uncle, the Rev. Robert Hamilton, D. D. many years Professor of Divinity in the College of Edinburgh.

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to things, and impoſe upon the ignorant or heedleſs. It is for this purpoſe, I believe, that it is produced by my learned and much honoured correſpondent; not as a proof which, had it been ſet up by you, would have convinced, or even ſtaggered, either him or me. It only proves, that in the infancy of Chriſtianity, Chriſtians, among the unbelieving Jews, who conſidered them as an heretical ſect in their own religion, went by the name of Nazarenes; as followers of the Nazarene; for that was the appellation which, in contempt, they gave our Lord himſelf, from the obſcure village to which his family belonged. But while the Chriſtians were called Nazarenes by the unbelieving Jews, they were called among themſelves *The Brethren*, *They of the Faith*, and *The Faith*; till at length, when they became more numerous, and received a large acceſſion of converts from the Gentiles, *Chriſtians* became the general name, and the Hebrew Chriſtians, who ſtill perhaps bore the name of Nazarenes among the Jews, were diſtinguiſhed among Chriſtians by the names of *The Hebrews* and *They of the Circumciſion*. I ſtill therefore abide by my aſſertion, that the name of Nazarene was never heard of *in the Church*, that is, among Chriſtians themſelves, as deſcriptive of a ſect (as a general name for the whole fraternity of believers, it was never heard of in the Church at all) but as deſcriptive of a ſect, it was never heard of before the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Adrian; when it became the ſpecific name of the Judaizers, who at that time ſeparated from the church of Jeruſalem, and ſettled in the North of Galilee

Galilee. The name was taken from the country in which they ſettled; but it ſeems to have been given in contempt, and not without alluſion to the earlier application of it by the Jews to the Chriſtians in general. The intent of it was, to ſignify that theſe Judaizers, who were for impoſing the yoke of the Moſaic Law upon the brethren of the uncircumciſion, knew ſo little of the ſpirit of the goſpel, that they were only to be conſidered as a ſect of Jews; and were undeſerving of any more honourable name, than that by which the unbelieving Jews, of the Apoſtolic age, had been accuſtomed to expreſs their contempt for the then new and little family of Chriſt: that they could not be more properly deſcribed than as heretical Jews, living in the pooreſt village of the pooreſt province.

LETTER EIGHTH.

A poſitive proof ſtill extant that our Lord's divinity was the belief of the very firſt Chriſtians.—The Epiſtle of St. Barnabas not the work of an apoſtle, but a production of the apoſtolic age—cited as ſuch by Dr. Prieſtley.—The author a Chriſtian of the Hebrews —a believer in our Lord's divinity—writes to Chriſtians of the Hebrews concurring in the ſame belief.

DEAR SIR,

I AM to produce a poſitive proof, that the divinity of our Lord was the belief of the very firſt Chriſ-

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tians. Give me leave then to aſk your opinion of that book, which hath been current in the church from the very firſt ages, under the title of *The Epiſtle of St. Barnabas*. It is quoted, you know, by Clemens Alexandrinus, not to mention later writers, as the compoſition of Barnabas the Apoſtle. Take no alarm, Sir—I ſhall not claim a place for it in the canon. I ſhall not contend, that any Apoſtle was its author. I am well perſuaded of the contrary. But the reaſons which perſuade me, are ſuch as ought to have no weight with you, if you will be true to your own principles. The ſtyle is indeed embarraſſed and undignified; the reaſoning is often unnatural and weak. Texts of the Old Teſtament are drawn by violence to allegorical ſenſes, which are inadmiſſible; as when Moſes, encouraging the Iſraelites to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, is ſuppoſed to exhort the Jews to embrace the Chriſtian religion; and in the deſcription of Canaan, as a land flowing with milk and honey, the land is our Saviour's body, the milk and honey are the doctrines and promiſes of the goſpel. The attempt to find evangelical types in the Jewiſh rites is injudiciouſly conducted. The eſſential part of a rite, which was of divine appointment, is often ſuperficially treated; and the ſuppoſed ſenſe of ſubordinate ceremonies, and thoſe very often of human inſtitution and of no ſignificance, is purſued with a trifling exactneſs: thus in the expoſition of the red heifer, and in that of the ſcape-goat; the ſtreſs is principally laid upon circumſtances, about which the divine law is ſilent. But what

what may leaſt of all be reconciled with the apoſtolic ſpirit, is that ſtrange cabaliſtic proceſs, by which the name of Jeſus and the Croſs are drawn from the number of Abraham's armed domeſtics; and the great credit which the author gives himſelf for ſuch diſcoveries. My notion of inſpiration will not allow me to believe, that an inſpired Apoſtle could be the writer of ſuch a book, and be vain of having written it. Your principles leave you at liberty to be leſs ſcrupulous. You, who have convicted St. Paul of reaſoning to precarious concluſions *, may eaſily admit that St. Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, might reaſon from falſe premiſes. You, who think that one apoſtle "has ſtrained his imagination very "much †" to find analogies between the rites of Judaiſm and ſomething in Chriſtianity, may eaſily ſuppoſe, that another Apoſtle from the ſame motive, a deſire of reconciling the Jews to Chriſtianity, may have ſtrained much more to make the analogy much more compleat. I can therefore ſee no reaſon, why you ſhould not receive what is called the Epiſtle of St. Barnabas, extravagant and nonſenſical as it is in many parts, for the genuine work of Barnabas the Apoſtle. But this is much more than I deſire, and much more than is neceſſary to my argument ‡. I

 ſuppoſe,

* Hiſtory of Corruptions, vol. II. p. 370.

† Hiſt. Corrupt. vol. I. p. 24.

‡ Modica ſunt, quæ in ejus gratiam, nec (ut puto) facile recuſanda: ut nimirum, ſi non ipſis ſaltem annis ejus honos habeatur; ſi non Apoſtolum agnoſcamus; eum tamen ceu Patrem

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ſuppoſe, however, that you will allow, what all allow, that the book is a production of the Apoſtolic age: in the fifth ſection of your hiſtory of the doctrine of atonement, you quote it among the writings of the Apoſtolic fathers. I think it fair to remind you of this circumſtance, leſt you ſhould haſtily advance a contrary opinion, when you find the teſtimony of this writer turned againſt you.

2. You allow him a place, then, among the fathers of the Apoſtolic age: and will you not allow, that he was a believer in our Lord's divinity? I will not take upon me, Sir, to anſwer this queſtion for you; but I will take upon me to ſay, that whoever denies it, muſt deny it to his own ſhame. "The Lord, ſays Barnabas, ſubmitted to ſuffer for "our ſoul, although he be THE LORD OF THE "WHOLE EARTH, unto whom he ſaid, the day "before the world was finiſhed, Let us make man "after our image and our likeneſs †." Again, "—— for if he had not come in the fleſh, how "could we mortals ſeeing him have been preſerved; "when they who behold the ſun, which is to periſh,

trem revereamur; et demum, ſi non in Canonem illum recipiendum ducamus, ſaltem in claſſicis ſcriptoribus, pro dignitate quam olim obtinuit apud Eccleſiæ ſcriptores antiquiſſimos, numeremus. *Præfat. Editoris Oxonienſis.*

† Dominus ſuſtinuit pati pro animâ noſtrâ, cum ſit orbis terrarum dominus, cui dixit die ante conſtitutionem ſæculi "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et ſimilitudinem noſ-"tram." § v.

"and

" and is the work of his hands, are unable to look " directly againſt its rays.*" Compare Deut. xviii. 16. Exod. xxxiii. 20. Judges vi. 23. and xiii. 22. Again " —— if then the Son of God, being Lord, " and being to judge the quick and dead, ſuffered " to the end that his wound might make us alive; " let us believe that the Son of God had no power " to ſuffer, had it not been for us †." And again, " Mean while thou haſt [the whole doctrine] con- " cerning the majeſty of Chriſt; how all things were " made for him and through him; to whom be ho- " nour, power, and glory, now and for ever ‡." He who penned theſe ſentences was ſurely a devout believer in our Lord's divinity. It is needleſs to obſerve, that he was a Chriſtian; and almoſt as needleſs to obſerve, that he had been a Jew. For in that age none but a perſon bred in Judaiſm could poſſeſs that minute knowledge of the Jewiſh rites, which is diſplayed in this book. In the writer therefore of the Epiſtle of St. Barnabas, we have one inſtance of a Hebrew Chriſtian of the Apoſtolic age, who believed in our Lord's divinity.

* —— Ει γαρ μη ἠλθεν ἐν σαρκι, πως ἀν ἐσωθημεν ἀνθρωποι βλεποντες ἀυτον, ὁτι τον μελλοντα μη εἰναι ἡλιον, ἐργον χειρων ἀυτȣ ὑπαρχοντα, ȣ̓κ ἰσχυȣσιν ἐις ἀκτινας ἀντοφθαλμησαι. § v.

† —— Εἰ ȣ̓ ὁ ὑιος τȣ θεȣ, ὠν Κυριος, και μελλων κρινειν ζωντας καὶ νεκρȣς, ἐπαθεν, ἱνα ἡ πληγη ἀυτȣ ζωοποιησῃ ἡμας· πιστευσωμεν, ὁτι ὁ ὑιος τȣ θεȣ ȣκ ἐδυνατο παθειν, ἐι μη δια ἡμας. § vii.

‡ Habes interim de majeſtate Chriſti, quo modo omnia in illum et per illum facta ſunt: cui ſit honor, virtus, gloria nunc et in ſæcula ſæculorum. § xvii.

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3. BUT this is not all. They muſt have been originally Jews to whom this epiſtle was addreſſed. The diſcourſe ſuppoſes them well acquainted with the Jewiſh rites, which are the chief ſubject of it: and indeed to any not bred in Judaiſm the book had been unintereſting and unintelligible. They were Hebrew Chriſtians, therefore, to whom a brother of the circumciſion holds up the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. He upholds it, not barely as his own perſuaſion, but as an article of their common faith. He brings no arguments to prove it—he employs no rhetoric to recommend it. He mentions it as occaſion occurs, without ſhewing any anxiety to inculcate it, or any apprehenſion, that it would be denied or doubted. He mentions it in that unheſitating language, which implies that the public opinion ſtood with his own. So that in this writer we have not only an inſtance of an Hebrew Chriſtian, of the apoſtolic age, holding the doctrine of our Lord's divinity; but in the book we have the cleareſt evidence, that this was the common faith of the Hebrew Chriſtians of that age, or in other words, of the primitive church of Jeruſalem.

4. THIS, Sir, is the proof, which I had to produce, of the conſent of that church with the later Gentile churches in this great article. It is ſo direct and full, though it lies in a narrow compaſs, that if this be laid in the one ſcale, and your whole maſs of evidence,

evidence, drawn from incidental and ambiguous allusions, in the other, LETTER EIGHTH.

" The latter will fly up, and kick the beam*."

I am, &c.

* See Dr. Priestley's attempt to invalidate this proof in the second of his Second Letters to me, and my Remarks upon the Second Letters. Part I. § 2, 3.

LETTER NINTH.

The proof of the orthodoxy of the first age overturns Dr. Priestley's arguments from Hegesippus and Justin Martyr—Hegisippus, a voucher for the Trinitarian faith—Dr. Priestley's own principles set aside his interpretation of Justin Martyr—Dr. Priestley himself gives it up.—Tertullian makes no acknowledgement of any popularity of the Unitarian tenets in his own time.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE it is proved of the first Christians of the circumcision, that they were believers in our Lord's divinity; what becomes of your two arguments to the contrary from Hegesippus and Justin Martyr? LETTER NINTH.

2. THE argument from Hegesippus rested on a presumption, that Hegesippus himself was an Unitarian. That Hegesippus himself was an Unitarian was presumed, because he was a Christian of the Hebrews,

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brews, and the Chriſtians of the Hebrews were ſuppoſed to be generally of that perſuaſion. But now that the reverſe is proved of the Hebrew Chriſtians, the preſumption muſt be reverſed concerning Hegeſippus. Hegeſippus muſt be deemed no Unitarian, and all conſequences deduced from the contrary ſuppoſition muſt be reverſed, or at leaſt they will vaniſh.

3. You remark indeed that Hegeſippus, enumerating the hereſies of his times, makes no mention of the Ebionæan*." But this, I ſuppoſe, is mentioned only as a circumſtance, that might ſeem to corroborate the inference from the ſuppoſed prevalency of the Ebionæan tenets in the antient Hebrew church, if that ſuppoſition might be allowed to ſtand. It will hardly be pretended, that this circumſtance alone will amount to a proof, that Hegeſippus was a diſſenter from what hath been ſhewn to be the prevailing opinion of his church. Of the five books of his Eccleſiaſtical Commentaries nothing more ſurvives than a few ſentences, cited by Euſebius in different parts of his hiſtory, which all brought together might perhaps fill two pages and a half in a folio of a middling ſize. In theſe fragments no mention occurs of the Ebionæan hereſy. Is it therefore to be concluded that the Ebionites were not mentioned, or not mentioned as Heretics, in the entire work? Or where is the cogency of this argument? In certain fragments of the work of Hegeſippus the Ebionites are not mentioned as Heretics; therefore the author was himſelf an Ebionite.

* Hiſt. of Corrup. vol. I. p. 8. and vol. II. p. 486. Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 8. Letters to Dr. H. p. 143.

4. SCANTY

4. SCANTY as theſe fragments are, Providence hath ſo ordered, that clear evidence is to be found in them that Hegeſippus was no Ebionite, and that his teſtimony is to be found in them in favour of the catholic faith. That he was no Ebionite appears with the higheſt evidence from a little circumſtance incidentally mentioned by Euſebius, which thoſe who only *look through* antient writers may be very apt to overlook. Euſebius relates, that Hegeſippus cited the Proverbs of Solomon, by a title which implied his acknowledgement of the book *: whereas the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Teſtament but the Pentateuch, nor the whole of that †. His teſtimony in favour of the Catholic faith is contained in his declaration "that he found in all the churches which he "viſited in his journey to Rome, that faith main-"tained which was agreeable to the law, the pro-"phets, and the doctrine of our Lord ‡." Hegeſippus, in this declaration, bears his teſtimony to the faith of all the churches at this time, that it was the faith which Chriſt had taught. But what faith the

* Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt. lib. iv. c. 22

† Dr. Prieſtley, in the third of his Second Letters, queſtions this fact; that the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Teſtament but the Pentateuch; and I muſt confeſs that his objections carry ſome weight. He remarks in particular, that Irenæus ſays of them, that they were over-curious in the expoſition of the prophecies; and that Grabe mentions fragments, which he had ſeen, of an expoſition of prophets aſcribed to Ebion. Still that Hegeſippus was no Ebionite is evident from the favourable teſtimony which he bears to the general doctrine of the church in his own time.

‡ Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt. lib. iv. c. 22.

churches

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churches at this time maintained, let Irenæus and Juſtin teſtify: and where is the Unitarian, who will have the forehead to affirm, that the faith, deſcribed as the faith catholic by Irenæus and by Juſtin, was any other than the Trinitarian?

5. So much for Hegeſippus. Now for Juſtin Martyr, your argument from his ſuppoſed apology for his own opinions as contrary to the general and prevailing, reſts on a particular interpretation of certain expreſſions, which in themſelves perhaps are not free from ambiguity. But this interpretation, Sir, reſts on your aſſumption, that the firſt Chriſtians were Unitarian. This being now diſproved, I will reaſon againſt your interpretation from your own principles, and, with little variation, in your own words; and from the contrary interpretation I will deduce the contrary concluſion.

6. Juſtin wrote, you know, "about the year 140; "i. e. about 80 years after the time of the Apoſtles *." If we conſider the ſtate of opinions in their time "we can hardly doubt, whether Juſtin aſſert it or "not, that the doctrine of *our Lord's divinity* † *muſt* "have been the prevailing one in his time ‡." For we have certain evidence §, that it was the opinion of the church in the age of the Apoſtles; and it is not likely, that ſo important a doctrine ſhould be

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17.

† Dr. Prieſtley's words are *the ſimple humanity of Chriſt.*

‡ Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17,

§ See my laſt Letter.

generally

generally abandoned "in so short a time as fourscore "years*. And if we take in another well authen- "ticated circumstance, we shall be obliged to reduce "this short space to one still shorter. Hegesippus "says——that the church of Jerusalem continued "a virgin, or free from heresy, till the death of Si- "meon, who succeeded James the Just, that is, till "the time of Trajan†, or about the year 100 or "perhaps 110.——Knowing therefore (*from "another evidence, that of Barnabas*) what this pu- "rity of Christian faith was, and what Hegesippus "must have known it to be, we have only the space "of 40, or perhaps 30 years, for so great a change. "So rapid at that particular period must have been "that movement, which we find by experience to be "naturally one of the very slowest in the whole "system of nature, viz. the revolution of opinions "in great bodies of men. Can it then be thought "probable, that the generality either of Jewish or "Gentile Christians, or both considered as one "body, the οἱ πλειστοι, should have abandoned the "doctrine of *our Lord's divinity* ‡ in the time of "Justin Martyr §." Certainly not. The words therefore, ἀδ' ἀν οἱ πλειστοι ἰαυλα μοι δοξασανλες εἰποιεν could not be intended to convey the sense, which

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 17.

† Euseb. Ecc. Hist. lib. 3. c. 32.

‡ Dr. Priestley's words are *the simple humanity of Christ.*

§ Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 18, 19.

you

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you and your vindicator would impoſe upon them. On the contrary they muſt be underſtood as an aſſertion, or at leaſt as an inſinuation, that the opinion of our Lord's meer humanity was generally condemned.

7. I once thought to have entered minutely into every part of the argument, which you and your vindicator have framed from this paſſage of Juſtin. But I find myſelf excuſed from that taſk by your candid acknowledgement, in the ſixth article of your poſtſcript, that you are influenced in your conſtruction of this paſſage by your own particular opinions; "and that another perſon having a different per-"ſuaſion concerning the ſtate of opinions in that "age, will naturally be inclined to put a different "conſtruction upon it*." A paſſage, which may bear one or another conſtruction, according to the previous perſuaſions of the reader, can be of little avail on either ſide. You are welcome to all the proof of that ſort, which you will take the trouble to amaſs. You ſeem, Sir, not inſenſible of its inſignificance. Perceiving at laſt, that the expreſſions of Juſtin, when you have made the moſt of them, are but ambiguous, you are inclined to lay but little ſtreſs upon the paſſage. You reſume the conſideration of it, with a declaration that you are not "folli-"citious about trifles †." I muſt remark however, that expreſſions, which in themſelves might be very ambiguous, may receive a definite ſenſe from the

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 130. † Ibid. p. 127.

known

known hiſtory of the writer's times. This is the caſe in this paſſage of Juſtin. His words, conſidered by themſelves, are ambiguous: but connected with the opinions of the writer and of his age, they afford a deciſive teſtimony againſt you.

8. But you think, if Juſtin Martyr and Hegeſippus fail, you have ſtill the poſitive teſtimony of Tertullian to oppoſe to my concluſions from the faith of the firſt Chriſtians. Tertullian, who was little younger than Juſtin, complains that in his time the Unitarian doctrine was the general perſuaſion. "The ſimple, the ignorant, and the unlearned, "who are always a great part of the body of Chriſ- "tians, becauſe the rule of faith transfers their wor- "ſhip of many Gods to the one true God, not "underſtanding that the unity of God is to be "maintained, but with the œconomy, dread this "œconomy *." I muſt confeſs, Sir, here ſeems, to be a complaint againſt the unlearned Chriſtians as in general unfavourable to the Trinitarian doctrine. But the complaint is of your own raiſing. Tertullian will vouch but for a very ſmall part of it. "Simple perſons †, ſays Tertullian (not to call them "ignorant and idiots) who always make the majo- "rity of believers, becauſe the rule of faith itſelf car- "ries us away from the many gods of the heathen

* Hiſt. Corrupt, vol. I. p. 55.

† Simplices enim (nec dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ) quæ major ſemper credentium pars eſt, quoniam et ipſa regula fidei, a pluribus diis ſæculi, &c. non intelligentes unicum quidem, ſed cum ſuâ œconomiâ credendum, expaveſcunt ad œconomiam.

"to

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" to the one true God, not underſtanding that one " God is indeed to be believed, but with an œcono- " my (or arangement) of the Godhead, ſtartle at the " œconomy. They take it for granted, that the " number and diſpoſition of the Trinity is a diviſion " of the Unity. They pretend that two, and even " three are preached by us, and imagine that they " themſelves are the worſhippers of one God. We, " they ſay, *hold the monarchy*. Latins have caught " up the word *monarchia*, Greeks will not underſtand " *œconomia*." Let the author's words be thus exactly rendered, and you will find in them neither complaint, nor acknowledgement, of a general prevalence of the Unitarian doctrine among Chriſtians of any rank. Tertullian alleges, that what credit it obtained was only with the illiterate; nor with all the illiterate, but with thoſe only, who were ignorant and ſtupid in the extreme. To preclude the plea of numbers, he remarks that the illiterate will always make the majority of believers. " Some ſimple people, he ſays, take a- " larm at the notion of a plurality of perſons in the " unity of the Godhead. Simple people ſaid I! I " ſhould have ſaid, ignorant and dull; who have " never been made to comprehend the true ſenſe of " the Apoſtles' creed; which ſpeaks of one God, in " oppoſition only to a plurality of independent Gods " worſhipped by the heathen, without any reſpect to " the metaphyſical unity of the Deity. When it is " conſidered, that perſons of mean endowments muſt " always be the majority of a body, collected, as the " church is, from all ranks of men; it were no " wonder, if the followers of the Unitarian preachers

" were

" were more numerous than they really are." This, Sir, is the natural expoſition of the paſſage, which you cite as Tertullian's teſtimony of the popularity of your favourite opinions in his own time. It is no ſuch teſtimony. It is a charge of ignorance againſt your party; of ſuch ignorance as would invalidate the plea of numbers, if that plea could be ſet up. The argument, which you build upon the rank and condition of Tertullian's Unitarians, who were common or unlearned people, can be of no force, unleſs it could be proved, that the Unitarian opinion was general in this rank of Chriſtians. The common people, who will be the laſt to depart from the opinions of their anceſtors, when they are left to themſelves, will on the other hand be the firſt to be ſtaggered with difficulties, and, for that reaſon, the firſt to be miſledde. Whatever therefore might be the novelty of the Unitarian doctrine in the age of Tertullian, it is no wonder that it ſhould find admirers among the moſt ignorant and ſtupid of the common people. *

9. You muſt ſearch, Sir, for ſome clearer teſtimony, than any that is to be found in Tertullian, Juſtin Martyr, or the few ſurviving fragments of Hegeſippus, to oppoſe to my proof from the Epiſtle of St. Barnabas.

I am, &c.

* See the Second of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions.

LETTER TENTH.

In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's third letter, in which he would prove that the primitive Unitarians were not deemed Heretics—His arguments from Tertullian, Juſtin Martyr, and Irenæus, confuted by the Monthly Reviewer—The inſufficiency of Dr. Prieſtley's reply—The arguments from Clemens Alexandrinus, and from Jerome confuted.

DEAR SIR,

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IT ſhould ſeem, that you have ſome ſecret miſtruſt in your own heart of the proof which you pretend to bring, that the Unitarian doctrine was orthodoxy in the firſt age; or you would have been leſs ſollicitous to ſhew, that the primitive Unitarians were not deemed Heretics. For a proof that confeſſed orthodoxy was not deemed hereſy, or in other words, that the orthodox did never excommunicate themſelves, might have been ſpared. This however is the ſubject of your third letter. Your arguments from the apoſtles creed, as it is ſtated by Tertullian*; from the little ſeverity with which Irenæus ſpeaks of the Ebionites †; and from the reſpect with which Juſtin Martyr treats thoſe blaſphemers ‡, for that is the appellation by which his regard for them is expreſſed, have been already ſo completely anſwered by my good and able *ally* § the Monthly Reviewer ‖, that little is left for me to ſay upon the ſubject.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 27. 28. †——p. 32. ‡——p. 31.

§ "Dr. Horſley conſiders this writer as learned in eccleſi-" aſtical hiſtory, and may wiſh to have him for an ally."

‖ In the Monthly Review for January 1784.

I MUST

2. I MUST take this occaſion to declare, that you are perfectly right in your conjecture *, that I entertain a high opinion of that Gentleman's learning in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. Indeed my opinion of his learning hath been gradually riſing, while yours hath been going down †: and what you predicted is at laſt come to paſs; I think myſelf happy in the alliance of that able Critic. I am informed by your laſt publication ‡, that my valuable ally is the Rev. Mr. Samuel Badcock, a diſſenting miniſter at South Molton, in Devonſhire. To what ever denomination of Chriſtians my worthy fellow-labourer may belong, he is a learned and an able advocate of the faith which was at firſt delivered to the Saints, and his alliance will not be diſgracefull, though he chooſes to fight in a reviewer's armour. Indeed I cannot ſee for what reaſon the alliance of a Chriſtian divine, although he be a reviewer by profeſſion, ſhould be leſs creditable than that, which you, Sir, ſo obſequiouſly court, with Jew, Turk, Heretic, and Infidel. You ſeem to think it unfair, that your antagoniſt ſhould avail himſelf of the prodigious advantage, which the Review gives him, of a cheap and immenſe circulation §. This complaint, Sir, really comes with an ill grace from you; who are every day diffuſing your dangerous doctrines among the common

* See note (§).

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 159.

‡ Remarks on the Monthly Review of the Letters to Dr. Horſley, &c.

§ Preface to the Letters to Dr. H. p. xxi.

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people, in pamphlets publiſhed for their benefit in an ordinary form, to be purchaſed at the eaſy price of ſixpence, a groat, and even twopence. Some reſerve on our part might be proper, if any were obſerved on yours. But while you invite the moſt illiterate of the laity to take a part in the diſpute, it is our duty to guard them, what we can, from ſeduction; to take advantage of every mode of cheap and general circulation, that the antidote may be as widely ſpredde, and as eaſy to be had, as the medicated phials.—I return to my ſubject.

3. JUSTIN Martyr's reſpect for the Unitarians of his time, you collect from certain paſſages, in which ſpeaking of heretics with the higheſt indignation he makes no alluſion, as you conceive, to the Unitarians. My learned ally replies *, that in one of theſe paſſages Juſtin Martyr expreſsly alludes to the Unitarians, under the very honourable character of blaſphemers of the Chriſt, whoſe coming had been announced by the Prophets. He remarks, that in this paſſage Juſtin couples the name of Chriſt with the title "of God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob," in a manner which, as it muſt bring to every learned reader's recollection other paſſages of the holy martyr's writings, in which Chriſt and the God of Abraham are deſcribed as the very ſame perſon, clearly defines the particular blaſphemy, which was the ſubject of the accuſation My learned ally complains, that your tranſlation of this paſſage is ſo *managed*, as to conceal this alluſion to the Unitarian

* Monthly Review for January 1784, p. 61, 62.

hereſy;

hereſy; and to convey "no idea of diſtinction be- "tween the Maker of the world and the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob." He might have added another complaint; that in your tranſlation you have ſuppreſſed another clauſe in the ſame period, in which certain perſons are treated with great ſeverity, "who, inſtead of worſhipping Jeſus" [inſtead of paying him divine worſhip, for that is the proper force of the verb σεβειν] "confeſſed him only in "name." Your reply * is indeed very extraordinary. It conſiſts of three parts. An apology for the omiſſions; a defence of your argument; a flat denial †, that you have made the omiſſions, for which however you have condeſcended to apologize.

4. Your apology is, that the omiſſions were made to *ſhorten a long Greek quotation* ‡. But, Sir, the omiſſions are in your Engliſh tranſlation; and the Greek, which is given at length at the bottom of your page, is nothing ſhortened by them. If the paſſage was to be ſhortened, either in Greek or in Engliſh; why was this ſhortening effected by the omiſſion of thoſe clauſes in particular, which might ſeem at leaſt adverſe to your argument? Your defence is, that the omitted paſſages affect not the argument either way. For the whole of Mr. Badcock's remark is anſwered you ſay at once ‖, by obſerving "that it is to no ſort of purpoſe, who it was "that Juſtin meant by the God of Abraham, Iſaac,

* Remarks on the Monthly Review of the Letters to Dr. Horſley, ſect. I.

† Appendix to the Remarks.

‡ Remarks, p. 14.

‖ Remarks, p. 13.

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" and Jacob: but who it was, that the heretics he " is ſpeaking of meant by the perſon ſo deſcribed, " and whom they meant to blaſpheme: and this " certainly was not Jeſus Chriſt but another being, " the ſuppoſed maker of the world, the author of " the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and the introducer of " much evil, which they ſaid Chriſt was ſent to rec- " tify." Sir, I apprehend, and my learned ally, I believe, will be of the ſame opinion, that the true, not the ſuppoſed, maker of the world was the perſon blaſphemed, by the introduction of the fabulous *Demiurgus* of the Gnoſtics. Of the ſame opinion was Juſtin. You cannot, Sir, know ſo little of his language as to imagine, that by the title of ποιητης των ὁλων, *the Maker of the Univerſe*, he deſcribes the Gnoſtic *Demiurgus*, not the true Creator, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. But how is it that you maintain, that Jeſus Chriſt was not blaſphemed, by thoſe whom Juſtin accuſes? Juſtin deſcribes thoſe whom he would accuſe, as blaſphemers of Jeſus Chriſt. This is in part the matter of his accuſation. That you ſhould attempt to deny it is extraordinary, Sir; when you confeſs, that you omitted it "to " ſhorten." It appears, however, that your arguments reſt entirely upon a ſuppoſition, that the blaſphemy of Jeſus was no part of Juſtin's accuſation. You took therefore that method of ſhortening, which might beſt ſerve your purpoſe.

5. BUT you inſiſt, that "they were Gnoſtics only, " not Unitarian Chriſtians, that Juſtin was reflecting " upon or alluding to*." Sir, will you take upon

* Remarks, p. 13.

you

you to define on whom Juſtin would reflect, in contradiction to Juſtin's own declaration. I think with you, that the phraſe ἄλλοι γαρ καὶ ἄλλον τροπον is diſtributive; introducing, not the mention of any new ſect, but a ſpecific enumeration of the ſects which had been already mentioned, under the general deſcription of "thoſe who taught men to ſay and to do "many impious and blaſphemous things." But the force of the objection, which my learned ally hath brought againſt your argument, depends not on the exact ſenſe of this phraſe. It is ſufficient for our purpoſe, that a blaſphemy of Chriſt, by denying his divinity, and refuſing to honour him with divine worſhip, is a part of Juſtin's deſcription of the hereſies to which he alludes. Whence it is manifeſt, that his reflections allude to other heretics beſide the Gnoſtics; unleſs indeed you will chooſe to ſay, that ſome of the Gnoſtics had a principal ſhare in this Unitarian blaſphemy: which, if you ſhould affirm, you will in me have no antagoniſt. It is indeed my opinion, that the Cerinthian Gnoſtics were the firſt who denied the divinity of our Lord. Cerinthus was much earlier than Ebion; and Ebion, in his notions of the redeemer, ſeems to have been a meer Cerinthian. But if you concur with me in theſe opinions, it is little to your purpoſe to inſiſt, that Juſtin Martyr's reflections are levelled only at the Gnoſtics; ſince in the Gnoſtics, according to this view of their opinions, he cenſures the Unitarians. If you deny, that our Lord's meer humanity was a doctrine maintained by any branch of the Gnoſtics, ſtill Juſtin expreſsly cenſures the Unitarians. If the

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Ebionites are not mentioned by name, are you ſure they are not included among the [ἀλλοι ἀλλῳ ὀνοματι] " others of various denominations," thus generally mentioned after an enumeration of the principal Gnoſtic ſects. The Ebionæan hereſy was at this time in its infancy, and probably too inconſiderable to deſerve particular notice.

6. Such, Sir, is your apology for your omiſſion, and ſuch is your defence of your argument. After this apology, and after this defence, comes in your appendix a flat denial of the omiſſions, for which you have apologized. A friend has told you, that the paſſage of Juſtin is entire, and in its proper place in your letters to me, page 31 *. It is true, Sir, the paſſage is entire in the Greek in the margin of your book. But has your friend told you, that it is entire in your tranſlation? My learned ally complains, and indeed, Sir, with too much reaſon, that you write for the unlearned. The entire paſſage, as long as it appears not in your tranſlation, lay innocently enough in the Greek at the bottom of your page.

7. To your argument from the Apoſtle's creed, as recited by Tertullian †, it might, Sir, be a ſufficient reply, that Jeſus Chriſt is mentioned in it as the Son of God; a title which, in the ſenſe in which it was conſtantly expounded and underſtood, rebrobates the Unitarian hereſy. But my learned ally refers you ‡ to another creed, produced by Ter-

* Appendix to Remarks.

† Letters to Dr. Horſley. p. 27. 28.

‡ Monthly Review for January 1784. p. 60.

tullian

tullian in the book, *De Præſcriptione, &c.* in which the divinity of Chriſt is more explicitly aſſerted. This you ſay is not ſimply a creed, but an expoſition of the creed *, and "expreſſes no more than Ter- "tullian's own faith †." Tertullian himſelf, Sir, "was of another opinion. He calls this expoſition "a rule of faith appointed by Chriſt. He ſays, it "expreſſed the general faith, which was diſputed "by none but heretics." After this, Sir, will you ſay, that "Tertullian did not conſider Unitarians as "excluded from the name and aſſemblies of Chriſ- "tians ‡."

8. CLEMENS Alexandrinus, who makes frequent mention of heretics, hath been very ſilent, you think, about the Ebionites. Hence, you ſeem deſirous to infer, that Clemens thought them not heretical. "Almoſt the whole," theſe are your words, "Almoſt "the whole of his ſeventh book of *Stromata* relate "to that ſubject [hereſies]. He mentions fourteen "different hereſiarchs by name, and ten hereſies by "character: but none of them bear any relation "to the Ebionites or any ſpecies of Unitarians §." Indeed, Sir, it was not without reaſon, that I complained, in my former publication, of the peculiarities of your ſtyle. I hope, that the great work which you are preparing upon the ſubject of our preſent controverſy, will be accompanied with a gloſſary, to explain the words of the Engliſh language,

* Remarks, &c. p. 18. † Ibid. p. 21.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 27.

§ Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 118.

upon

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upon which you ſhall be pleaſed to impoſe new ſenſes: and that in particular you will not omit to inform your readers, how much of a thing may be meant by the WHOLE in your new phraſeology.

9. I FIND, Sir, by the beſt computation I can form upon a ſingle example, which I am ſenſible muſt be liable to great inaccuracies, I ſpeak therefore under the correction of your authoritative deciſion—but by the beſt computation I can form, the WHOLE may be any part of a thing not leſs than a forty-eighth. I beg your pardon—I had written this, when turning back to the errata, at the beginning of your book, I there find, that you have been yourſelf very properly ſhocked at the extravagant hyperboliſm of your own expreſſions; and for the words *almoſt the whole*, you adviſe the reader to ſubſtitute theſe, *a great part*. Sir, a reluctant and imperfect retractation is more unſeemly than the firſt error, be it ever ſo enormous. If you would not be thought to impoſe upon your reader's ignorance, or to preſume upon his inattention, you muſt correct again; and for *a great* bid him read *a very little part*. The ſeventh book of the *Stromata*, in Sylburgius's edition, which I uſe as moſt convenient for my preſent purpoſe, becauſe the pages, not encumbered with notes, all contain equal quantities of text: in this edition the ſeventh book, Greek and Latin, fills 48 pages. The general ſubject of the book is the excellence of Chriſtian Knowledge in preference to Philoſophy. This argument fills more than 38 pages of the 48, that is, more

more than three-fourths of the whole book, without any mention of heretics. Then the author anſwers an objection to the certainty of Chriſtian knowledge, taken from the differences of opinion that ſubſiſted among the different ſects. This introduces a general invective againſt heretics, and a diſſuaſive of hereſy, drawn from general topics, not from the enormities of particular ſects; which fills eight pages more. The diſſuaſive of hereſy leads to an argument for the authority of the Church upon the footing of antiquity: and this introduces the names of ſome remarkable hereſies, which are mentioned for no other purpoſe, but to ſhew that the very denominations, which they bore, argued a late origin, ſingularity of opinion, and ſeparation from a more antient ſociety. This liſt, with many interſperſed remarks upon the origin of each ſect, and aſſertions of the unity of the true church, fills perhaps three-fourths of one of the two remaining pages of the book: for the laſt page is taken up with a whimſical explanation of the Levitical marks of clean and unclean beaſts; which are ſuppoſed to be types of the good and bad qualities of true Chriſtians and of heretics. Thus it appears that that great part of the ſeventh book of the *Stromata*, which you had well nigh miſtaken for the whole, is ſomewhat leſs than one part in forty-eight.

10. But the Ebionites have no place in that long liſt of heretics, which occupies almoſt the whole, or, to ſpeak more accurately, a great part, or, to ſpeak exactly, almoſt a forty-eighth part of the ſeventh book

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of the *Stromata**. I think indeed they have not, unleſs they be included, which I ſuſpect may be the caſe, among the Peratic heretics. But I will grant that they are omitted. Is it, Sir, a conſequence, that Clemens thought their opinions indifferent? I cannot ſee the neceſſity of this concluſion, unleſs indeed it had been of importance to the argument of Clemens, that he ſhould make an exact enumeration of all the ſects, which he deemed heretical. But this was not the caſe. A few inſtances ſufficed for the illuſtration of his reaſoning; and theſe, in a diſcuſſion with Greek philoſophers, he would naturally ſelect from thoſe hereſies, which, for ſomething of ſubtlety and refinement in their doctrine, were the moſt likely to have attracted the notice of the Gentiles. A ſect, which lived in obſcurity in the North of Galilee, of no conſideration for number, learning, or abilities, was likely to be the laſt that he would mention.

11. It is another circumſtance which you urge, Sir, in favour of the early Unitarians, that it is confeſſed by Jerom, that the Ebionites were anathematized, not for their Unitarian opinions, but for their rigid adherence to the Moſaic law† ——*propter hoc ſolum á patribus anathematizati ſunt, quód legis cærimonias Chriſti evangelio miſcuerunt.*

12. I Shall frankly confeſs, Sir, that if nothing more were known either of the Ebionites or Cerin-

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 118.

† Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 34.

thians,

thians, from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, than what might be gathered from this ſentence of Jerom; I ſhould be apt to conclude, that the ſingle error of either ſect was this; that they judaiſed. The words however are capable of another meaning; namely, that the Judaic ſuperſtition was a thing ſo criminal in the judgement of the primitive Chriſtians, as to conſtitute *by itſelf* one very ſufficient reaſon for the excommunication of the ſects, which were addicted to it. For it is to be obſerved, that the Ebionites are coupled in this paſſage with the Cerinthians. It is ſaid of both, that "for "this ſingle thing they were anathematized, that they "mixed the ceremonies of the law, with the goſpel "of Chriſt." This being ſaid of both without diſtinction, muſt be ſaid of either in ſome ſenſe in which it may be true of both: and if it acquit the Ebionites of hereſy, except in the ſingle article of their Judaiſm, it equally acquits the Cerinthians. If it be to be concluded from theſe expreſſions of Jerom, that to deny our Lord's divinity was no hereſy in the Ebionites; it is equally to be concluded from theſe ſame expreſſions, that to deny that God was the creator of the univerſe, was no hereſy in the Cerinthians. If this paſſage of Jerom be no teſtimony in favour of the Cerinthian doctrine about the creation; it is no teſtimony in favour of the Ebionæan doctrine about our Lord. It is lame and defective, like every other teſtimony which you have produced to the ſame purpoſe; and your opinion, that the Primitive Unitarians were not conſidered as heretics, I muſt ſtill, Sir, in defiance of

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of all your teſtimonies, take the liberty to place among the extravagant aſſertions of Daniel Zuicker, of which Simon Epiſcopius was the charitable but inſufficient advocate.

I am, &c.

P. S. You are pleaſed, Sir, to ſay in the concluſion of your third Letter, that the Unitarian doctrine, even in its moſt obnoxious form, exiſted in the very time of the Apoſtles. I deny that the Unitarian doctrine exiſted at that time in the moſt obnoxious form. Produce your indiſputable evidence. Obſerve that by the moſt obnoxious form, I underſtand that form, which excludes the worſhip of Chriſt.

N. B. In anſwer to Dr. Prieſtley's argument from the writings of Irenæus in particular, ſee the Third of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions.

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In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's fourth, in which he defends his argument from a paſſage in Athanaſius.—The ſenſe of the words ἀλλα ἐυλογος miſtaken by Dr. Prieſtley—The ſenſe of the word συνεσις miſtaken by Dr. Prieſtley—Prudence and Caution not ſynonymous—The matter of fact, as repreſented by Athanaſius, miſtaken by Dr. Prieſtley—His grammatical argument refuted.—That Athanaſius ſpeaks of unconverted Jews proved from a compariſon of the two clauſes in which Jews are mentioned.—The Gentiles not intereſted in queſtions about the Meſſiah.—Of deference to authorities.

DEAR SIR,

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A SUPPOSED teſtimony of Athanaſius made a principal branch of your original proof, that the faith of the firſt Chriſtians was Unitarian; and this, with other principal branches of your proof, found a place among my ſpecimens of your evidence, of which it was the third in order. For this teſtimony of Athanaſius, you refer your reader to Athanaſius's defence of the Alexandrine Dionyſius, where you think you find a confeſſion of two very important circumſtances; that the Apoſtles uſed great caution in divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of Chriſt; and that the occaſion of this caution was the prevalency of a contrary perſuaſion among the firſt Hebrew Chriſtians.

2. IN oppoſition to this, I took upon me to aſſure the reverend aſſembly which I had the honour to addreſs,

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dreſs, that no mention of the caution of the Apoſtles, or of the heterodoxy of the firſt Jewiſh Chriſtians, is to be found in the defence of Dionyſius—I believe I might have added, in any part of the writings of Athanaſius.

3. You have now, Sir, in your fourth letter, produced the paſſage, from the defence of Dionyſius, in which you conceive that theſe important ſecrets are betrayed. This paſſage, you ſay, you "only abridged "before*." (I am ſorry, Sir, to remind you, that the manner in which your abridgments are managed, has appeared in other inſtances). You abridged it before, but now you "give a larger portion of it at "full length:" not the whole, by your own confeſſion; "for the whole is much too long to tranſcribe." Pardon me, Sir, if I add, that the whole, were it tranſcribed, would juſtify the ſummary which I have given of it in my Charge: it would prove, that the example of the Apoſtles is alleged for the purpoſe which I aſſign, and in the manner which I mention: it would prove therefore that this "larger portion," which you have given "at full length," is nothing to your purpoſe. But to bring the matter to a ſhort iſſue, I will ſet the general ſcope of the diſcourſe quite out of the queſtion. I will take the particular portion, which you have produced, by itſelf, as you deſire it ſhould be taken: and I will ſhew, that even thus taken it will give no ſupport to your aſſertions, without a ſingular conſtruction of certain words and phraſes, which cannot be admitted.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 39.

4. The

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4. THE Apoſtles, it is ſaid, ſpake of Chriſt as a man; a man of Nazareth; a man obnoxious to ſufferings. Was it that the Apoſtles were in the ſentiments of Arius? No ſuch thing. "But this they did, "as wiſe maſter-builders and ſtewards of the myſ- "teries of God; and they had this ſpecious pretence "for it ———*." Stop, Sir, a moment. What do I hear? A ſpecious pretence for it! For what? For doing as wiſe maſter-builders and ſtewards of the myſteries of God. Are ſpecious pretences needed then for wiſe conduct? Or were the Apoſtles men to make pretences? Surely this is the language of Dr. Prieſtley, not of Athanaſius. He thought more reverently of the Apoſtles. Let him ſpeak for himſelf. Καὶ την ἀιδιαν ἐχουσιν ἐυλογον. Is *pretence* the ſenſe of ἀιδια? The true Greek word for *pretence* is προφασις. And even had this word been uſed, the adjective ἐυλογος would have carried it away from that baſe meaning, which is inſeparable from the Engliſh words *ſpecious pretence*. For ἐυλογος is not *ſpecious* in the Engliſh ſenſe. It may be applied to any thing *in quo ſpecies cernitur honeſti*; but it is not meer ſeeming. Had Athanaſius meant to ſay, that the Apoſtles had a ſpecious pretence only for their conduct, the adjective muſt have been πιθανος. He muſt have ſaid, καὶ προφασιν τινα ἐιχον πιθανην. Or, καὶ ὐκ ἀπιθανον τινα ἐσχον προφασιν.

5. THE word ἀιδια hath two principal ſenſes; a philoſophical and a popular. Either of the two may ſuit this place. Amongſt the philoſophers it ſignifies

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 39.

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a cauſe, in any one of the four kinds of cauſes; the material, the efficient, the formal, or the final. Hence it comes to ſignify a motive, motives being final cauſes conſidered in their relation to the mind of a rational agent. Thus Plato, ſpeaking of the Creator's motive for a particular arrangement of the heavenly bodies, τα δ' ἀλλα, ὁι δη καὶ δι' ἃς ΑΙΤΙΑΣ ἱδρυσάτο, εἰτις ἐπεξιοι πασας, &c. *in Timæo.* Again, δια δη την ΑΙΤΙΑΝ καὶ τον λογισμον τονδε ἐν ὁλον ἐξ ἁπαντων ——ἐτεκτηνατο. *in Timæo.* A motive may be either good or bad, but ἀιτια ἐυλογος can be only good. It muſt be a wiſe and honourable motive; or, in plain Engliſh, *a good reaſon.*

6. Αἰτια, in the rhetorical or popular ſenſe, anſwers to the Engliſh word *cauſe* in its forenſic meaning. It ſignifies an action or ſuit at law, or a criminal indictment. In this ſenſe ἀιτια ἐυλογος is a cauſe fairly defenſible, upon a juſt and honourable plea. I am inclined to prefer this ſenſe of the word in this place, becauſe the verb ἐχεσι is in the preſent time, when the preceding and the following are in the paſt. "If "the conduct of the apoſtles ſhould be at any time "queſtioned, they have a fair and ſubſtantial plea." This may ſtill be expreſſed in Engliſh by *a good reaſon.* This therefore is the proper Engliſh phraſe to convey the holy father's meaning, whether ἀιτια be taken in its philoſophical or in its popular ſenſe.

7. Now, Sir, if for *ſpecious pretence* you will be pleaſed to ſubſtitute *good reaſon*, you will find that this

this paſſage, even in your own tranſlation, will afford no ground for the inferences you would build upon it. Athanaſius proceeds to ſhew what this good reaſon was; and he commends the great ſagacity, which was diſplayed in the conduct of the apoſtles.

8. THE deficiencies of your tranſlation, I muſt however confeſs, are abundantly compenſated in your comment. "I now have produced the paſ-"ſage, you ſay, and have pointed out a word, viz. "συνεσις, which, in the connection in which it ſtands "can bear no other ſenſe than caution, and great "caution; μετα πολλης συνεσεως ——*." Sir, may I aſk in what lexicon (you muſt excuſe me if I ſuſpect that you are uſed to take the ſenſes of Greek words from ordinary lexicons) in what lexicon, good or bad, have you found that συνεσις, in any connection may ſtand for *caution?* It is literally the meeting or coming together of different things; and applied to the mind, it is properly that faculty, or that act of the mind, by which it brings things together, and compares them, and forms a ready judgment of fitneſſes and diſcongruities. It is expounded by the antient Greek lexicographers, who beſt underſtood their own language, to be the "knowledge of comparables and incomparables; "or a ready following of the mind quickly bring-"ing together the notions of things, readily diſco-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.

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" vering what is proper and beſeeming to each *."
Plato ſays more conciſely, συνιεναι means that the mind *goes along* with things †. *Sagacity* is the Engliſh word, which moſt nearly renders the ſame idea. *Prudence*, the word which you have uſed in your tranſlation, may be born, but the idea, which it gives, is rather ſimilar than the ſame. You have ſhewn, you ſay, " from the whole tenor of the " diſcourſe, that Athanaſius could have intended " nothing elſe than to deſcribe their prudence, or " extreme caution ‡." *Prudence, or extreme caution!* Do you really think, Sir, that prudence and caution in the Engliſh language are ſynonymous? If that be your opinion, I muſt beg that one or both of theſe words may go into the gloſſary ‖, and be declared equivalent. *Caution* is indeed ſometimes uſed abuſively for *diſcretion:* but in its proper ſenſe it carries with it the notion of ſome diſhoneſt art: and caution, in a teacher or diſputant, always denotes an artful proviſion by ſome diſhoneſt reſerve for the ſucceſs of doctrine or of argument. In the preſent caſe, if you uſe the word without affixing to it the notion of concealment, it will not ſerve your purpoſe. But nothing of concealment is implied in the Greek word. Athanaſius extolls the ſagacity of the Apoſtles; their caution he never mentions.

9. STILL you will inſiſt that he deſcribes the thing, though he may not have called it by its pro-

* See Phavorinus.
† In Cratylo.
‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.
‖ See p. 185.

per

per name. " He evidently, you ſay, does not re- LETTER XI.
" preſent them as deferring the communication of
" the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, on account
" of its being more conveniently taught afterwards,
" as part of a ſyſtem of faith; but only leſt it
" ſhould have given offence to the Jews *." I cannot read this ſentence without aſtoniſhment, when I turn back to the quotation, and find that you have fairly produced the paſſage, in which Athanaſius, in your own tranſlation as well as in the original, affirms that what related to our Lord's humanity was taught *firſt*, for no other reaſon, but that the doctrine of his divinity might be taught *afterwards* with more effect. The deſire of inſtructing the Jews, not the fear of offending them, was the motive with the Apoſtles for propounding firſt what was the eaſieſt to be underſtood, and the moſt likely to be admitted.

10. But whatever the motive may have been with the Apoſtles, for their conduct, you inſiſt that the fact was, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not divulged by them: and of this you think you find a proof in this paſſage of Athanaſius: in which you think it is confeſſed, that the Apoſtles in the opening of their miniſtry were very reſerved upon this article; and you obſerve, and I think not improperly, that the reaſons for that reſerve (if they ever ſubſiſted) would operate till within a ſhort time of the diſperſion and death of the Apoſtles. Whence

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 45.

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you conclude, that if ever they divulged this doctrine, it muſt have been at ſo late a period, that the church, in conſequence of their former ſilence upon the ſubject, muſt have been fixed in the contrary perſuaſion *.

11. But what if the foundation of this whole argument ſhould be rotten. What if the whole ſhould be built on a miſinterpretation of Athanaſius. Athanaſius affirms not, that the Apoſtles, in any period of their miniſtry, kept the doctrine of our Lord's divinity a ſecret: or that they were reſerved upon this or any article of faith, with thoſe who were ſo far converted as to be catechumens. In their firſt public ſermons, addreſſed to the unbelieving multitude, they were content to maintain, that Jeſus, whom the Jews had crucified, was riſen from the dead; without touching his divinity otherwiſe than in remote alluſions. But to ſuppoſe that they carried their converts no greater length, is to ſuppoſe that their private inſtruction was not more particular than their public. For this you will find little ſupport in Athanaſius; or in Chryſoſtom; who is called upon to corroborate the argument from the conceſſions of Athanaſius.

12. But whatever the doctrine of the Apoſtles might be, or whatever opinion Athanaſius, or Chryſoſtom, might entertain concerning it; Athanaſius, it ſeems, acknowledges that the firſt Jewiſh Chriſ-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 42——44.

tians

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tians were Unitarians. Οι τοτε Ιεδαιοι, "The Jews "of that time," or, "The then Jews," is the name, by which the perſons are deſcribed, who are ſaid to have holden the erroneous belief of the meer humanity of the Meſſiah. Now, Sir, if "The "then Jews," Οι τοτε Ιεδαιοι, may denote Jewiſh Chriſtians; will you be pleaſed to inform me, what more preciſe expreſſions the holy father might have found in the whole compaſs of the Greek language, to denote genuine Jewiſh Jews, had he had occaſion to mention them? But the verbs, it ſeems "in "that part of the paſſage which mentions *Chriſt* "*being come of the ſeed of David*, and the *word be-* "*ing made fleſh*, are not in the *future tenſe**." In this remark, Sir, I cannot but admire the ſingular *caution* of the expreſſion. "The verbs——are not "in the future tenſe." It is true, they are not. But the moſt important of theſe verbs, in that part of the paſſage which mentions the Meſſiah's coming, although it be not in the future form, carries a future ſignification. It is in the infinitive mood of the preſent tenſe; which often denotes an inſtant futurity, but never denotes time either long ſince, or juſt now, paſt. This obtains in all the Greek verbs, but particularly in the verb ἐρχομαι; which, not only by uſe, but naturally involves a notion of futurity even in the preſent tenſe. Ενομιζον τον Χριστον ψιλον ανθρωπον μονον——ἐρχεθαι. "They thought "the Chriſt was *a-coming* as a meer man only." This expreſſion refers to the Meſſiah not as come,

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

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but as coming. Another verb, I confeſs, which relates to the incarnation of the Word, is in a preterite tenſe. ἐδε ὁτι λογος σαρξ ἐγενεῖο ἐπιϛευον. "Neither believed they, that the word *was made* fleſh." ὁ λογος σαρξ ἐγενεῖο, "the word was made fleſh," theſe are the words in which St. John mentions the incarnation. The holy father, it is likely, choſe to uſe the very words of the evangeliſt in ſpeaking of this myſtery; and for that reaſon, he may have ſacrificed ſomewhat of the accuracy of his ſyntax to the exactneſs of his quotation. The paſſage ſhould be printed thus. ἐδε "ὁτι ὁ λογος σαρξ ἐγενεῖο" ἐπιϛευον. In this grammatical argument your *prudence* appears, not only in the very guarded expreſſions, in which you have ſtated it; but in the declaration, with which it is prefaced, that you deſire to lay no great ſtreſs upon it. What you have reſpect to in this paſſage "is the obvious general tenour and ſpirit of it*." Indeed, Sir, you would do well to be cautious, upon all occaſions, how you handle theſe briars of criticiſm. Let us return then to the general tenour of the paſſage.

13. You know, Sir, that Jews are twice mentioned in it. "The Jews of that age being deceived themſelves, and having deceived the Gentiles." And again, "——the bleſſed apoſtles "——taught what related to the humanity of our "Saviour to the Jews." Is it your opinion, Sir, that they are the ſame or different perſons, who are

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

mentioned

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mentioned under the name of Jews, in theſe two different clauſes? If they are different perſons, I deſire to know, what circumſtance or note of difference you find in the author's expreſſions? If you find none, on what is your opinion of a difference founded? Or not to entangle you again in grammatical diſquiſitions, I will for a moment ſuppoſe the perſons different, and deſire you to ſhew me, what will then be the ſenſe or coherence of the writer's argument. If you allow that the ſame perſons are deſigned in both places under the ſame name; I muſt deſire you to remark, that the Jews, mentioned in the ſecond inſtance, were perſons who were "at any rate to be perſwaded (*at any rate*, that is "the force of ὁλως, which you have erroneouſly "rendered by the word *fully*) at any rate to be per-"ſuaded, from the actual ſtate of things, and from "the evidence of the miracles which had been "wrought, that the Chriſt was come*." Could theſe, Sir, be converted Jews? Could they be already Chriſtians, in whom this general perſuaſion, "that the Chriſt was come," was yet to be wrought? Wanting this perſuaſion they were clearly Jews, whoſe converſion was not yet begun: and of the ſame deſcription, ſince they were indeed the very ſame perſons, were the Jews, to whom it is imputed, that they held the erroneous belief of the Meſſiah's meer humanity, and that they ſpread the like error among the Gentiles.

* Ινα ὁλως πεισαντες αὐτες ἐκ των φαινομενων καὶ γενομενων σημειων.

14. But

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14. But the Gentiles, you ſay, who were thus miſledde, muſt have been Chriſtian Gentiles; and by conſequence the Jews, who miſled them, were Jewiſh Chriſtians *. But, Sir, whence is the certainty that Chriſtian Gentiles were intended by Athanaſius? It hangs upon this principle, that to any other Gentiles the whole doctrine of a Meſſiah muſt have been unintereſting †. Have you forgotten, Sir, have you never known, or would you deny, what is not denied by candid Infidels, that the expectation of a great deliverer or benefactor of mankind was univerſal even in the Gentile world, about the time of our Lord's appearance? If you acknowledge this, where is the improbability, that the general opinion concerning this perſonage ſhould be modified by the opinions which prevailed in Judæa, which was the center of the tradition? Eſpecially when it is conſidered, that the Proſelytes of the gate made an eaſy channel of communication between the Jews and the idolatrous Gentiles. But whatever you may be diſpoſed to grant, or to deny; this argument is eaſily inverted, and turned againſt you. It hath been ſhewn, that none but Jew Jews can be intended by Athanaſius, when he ſpeaks of the Jews as miſleaders of the Gentiles. They were Gentile Gentiles therefore who were miſledde: for from unbelieving Jews Chriſtians of the Gentiles would hardly take inſtruction.

15. Your laſt reſource is to flee for ſhelter to the authority of Beauſobre. "The learned Beauſobre,

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 41. † Ibid.

"a Tri-

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" a Trinitarian, and therefore an unexceptionable " judge in this caſe, quoting this very paſſage does not " heſitate to pronounce, that they were believing " Jews, who were intended by the writer*." It is for you, Sir, to judge, what deference is due from you to the authority of Beauſobre. For my own part—I ſhall not affect a modeſty, which I feel not—when the ſenſe of a Greek ſentence is the thing in queſtion, if I have the writer upon my own ſhelf, or can find him upon my friend's, it is not much my practice to ſtand bowing at a diſtance to authorities; unleſs indeed it be the authority of a Caſaubon, a Scaliger, or a Bentley. But theſe men would laugh, or they would ſtorm, at your attempts to conſtrue Greek, with Beauſobre at your elbow. To conſtrue Greek! I fear, Sir, they would think but lightly of your Latin erudition, after the ſpecimen which you have given of it, in your attempt to wreſt from my learned ally his ſtrong argument for the difference, which we aſſert, in articles of faith between the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. The feats of criticiſm, which you have performed for this purpoſe upon certain plain words of Jerom†, to draw them from the only meaning of which they are capable, had you been a Weſtminſter man, were enough to bring old Buſby from his grave. But alas, Sir, you are not to be perſuaded though one ſhould riſe from the dead. I truſt our readers are perſuaded, that the argument from

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 42.

† Ibid. p. 152.——156.

Athanaſius;

LETTER XI. Athanasius* was with great justice and propriety placed among my specimens of insufficient proof.

I am, &c.

LETTER TWELFTH.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's Fifth; in which he moves certain chronological difficulties.— Himself chiefly concerned to find the solution—His question divided— The divinity of our Lord preached from the very beginning by the Apostles.—St. Stephen a martyr to this doctrine.——His dying ejaculations justify the worship of Christ.— Christ deified in the story of St. Paul's conversion.—The divinity of Jesus acknowledged by the Apostles from the time when they acknowledged him for the Messiah.—Notions of a Trinity, and of the deity of the Messiah, current among the Jews in the days of our Saviour.

Dear Sir,

LETTER XII. IN your fifth Letter you call upon me to assign the particular time, when the knowledge of our Lord's divinity, which, in the persuasion that the Apostles were taxed by the fathers with a reserve upon

* Of the testimonies of other writers, by which Dr. Priestley attempts to confirm his argument from Athanasius, see the Tenth of his Second Letters to me, and my Remarks upon his Second Letters, part 2. c. i. §. 10.——14.

the

the ſubject, you are pleaſed to call "the great ſecret "of Chriſt being not a meer man, but the eternal "God*;" you call upon me to aſſign the time, when this great ſecret "was communicated firſt to "to the Apoſtles, and then by them to the body of "Chriſtians†." You "requeſt my opinion" upon this queſtion with a certain air of triumph, which ſeems to imply, that, in your apprehenſion, I muſt be much at a loſs to frame an opinion upon it, which may be conſiſtent with my creed. But the truth is, that you are yourſelf the perſon moſt concerned to find the ſolution. Or to expreſs myſelf more accurately, the queſtion ſplits into two, of which the one concerns not me, and the other concerns not either of us.

2. When was the doctrine of our Lord's divinity firſt publiſhed in the church by the Apoſtles?

3. When was the knowledge of the thing firſt conveyed to the minds of the Apoſtles themſelves?

4. Theſe, Sir, are two diſtinct queſtions. Of the firſt, it is your concern, not mine, to ſeek the ſolution. For ſince I have clearly traced the belief of Chriſt's proper deity up to the Apoſtolic age; unleſs you can aſſign the particular epocha of the publication, I have a right to conclude, that it was a part of the very earlieſt doctrine. Nay, if you ſhould even be able to aſſign ſome later time of its commencement,

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 55. † Ibid.

yet

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yet ſince that time muſt fall within the compaſs of the Apoſtolic age, to which you are limited by virtue of my proof from the epiſtle of St. Barnabas, a queſtion might indeed ariſe, which might be of difficult reſolution; why was this doctrine, for a certain time, kept back? But this difficulty would not ſhake the credit of the doctrine. For ſince there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that any of the Apoſtles, having once received the light of inſpiration, was in any future period of his life deprived of it; any doctrine publiſhed by them claims implicit credit, whatever might be the time of its firſt publication. A diſcovery that St. John had made, in the laſt moments of his life, had been equally to be believed, as any thing that St. Peter preached, in his firſt ſermon on the day of pentecoſt. You will therefore chooſe your own epocha for the diſcovery of "the great ſecret." Place it, where it beſt may pleaſe you in the Apoſtolic age; I will hold no argument with you upon the ſubject. In my own congregations I ſhall think it my duty to bear my witneſs, that from the very beginning of the goſpel the thing had been no ſecret. For proof from holy writ, I ſhall have recourſe to thoſe very paſſages of the Apoſtolic hiſtory, from which you draw the contrary inference. I ſhall remind my hearers, that in St. Peter's firſt public ſermon, when it was reaſonable to keep to the general aſſertion, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, rather than to enter into the particulars which that character might involve; alluſions are nevertheleſs uſed, which diſcover that the mind of the ſpeaker was ſtrongly impreſſed with notions,

which

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which it was his policy to conceal. I ſhall particularly deſire them to remark, that it is ſaid of our Lord Jeſus, that "it was not poſſible that he ſhould "be holden of death*." The expreſſions clearly imply a phyſical impoſſibility. I ſhall bid them obſerve, that the great miracle of that day is ſaid to be an exertion of the power of Jeſus exalted by God's right hand †. And I ſhall maintain, that the three perſons are diſtinctly mentioned in a manner which implies the divinity of each, "Jeſus—being by the "right hand of God exalted, and having received of "the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt‡"—— of the Father—παρα τυ πατρος—*The Father:* the ſubſtantive, with the article prefixed, deſcribes a perſon, whoſe character it is to be the Father. Paternity is the property, which individuates the perſon. But from whom is the firſt principle thus diſtinguiſhed? From his creatures? From them he were more ſignificantly diſtinguiſhed by the name of God. Not generally therefore from his creatures, but particularly from the two other perſons mentioned in the ſame period, Jeſus, and the Holy Ghoſt. And ſince this is his diſtinction, that he is the Father of that Son, from whom together with himſelf the Holy Ghoſt proceeds; it follows, that the interval, between him and them, is no more than relation may create; that the whole difference lies in perſonal diſtinctions, not in eſſential qualities. Thus I will ever reaſon, Sir, for the edification of my own flock, but with

* Acts ii. verſ. 24.

† Acts ii. verſ. 32, 33.

‡ Ibid.

little

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little hope of your conviction from St. Peter's firſt ſermon.

I SHALL always inſiſt, Sir, that the bleſſed Stephen died a martyr to the DEITY of Chriſt. The accuſation againſt him, you ſay, was "his ſpeaking "blaſphemous things againſt the temple and the "law*." You have forgotten to add the charge of blaſphemy "againſt Moſes and againſt God†." The blaſphemy againſt the temple and the law probably conſiſted in a prediction, that the temple was to be deſtroyed, and the ritual law of courſe aboliſhed. The blaſphemy againſt Moſes was probably his aſſertion, that the authority of Moſes was inferior to that of Chriſt. But what could be the blaſphemy againſt God? What was there in the doctrine of the Apoſtles, which could be interpreted as blaſphemy againſt God, except it was this, that they aſcribed divinity to one who had ſuffered publicly as a malefactor. That this was the bleſſed Stephen's crime, none can doubt, who attends to the concluſion of the ſtory. He "looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven," ſays the inſpired hiſtorian, "and ſaw the glory of God," [that is, he ſaw the ſplendor of the Shechinah, for that is what is meant, when the glory of God is mentioned as ſomething to be ſeen] "and Jeſus "ſtanding on the right hand of God‡." He ſaw the man Jeſus in the midſt of this divine light. His declaring what he ſaw‖, the Jewiſh rabble underſtood as an aſſertion of the divinity of Jeſus. They ſtop-

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 60. † Acts vi. verſe 11.
‡ Acts vii. verſe 55. ‖ Acts vii. verſe 56.

ped

ped their ears; they overpowered his voice with their own clamours; and they hurried him out of the city, to inflict upon him the death which the law appointed for blaſphemers *. He died, as he had lived, atteſting the deity of our crucified Maſter. His laſt breath was uttered in a prayer to Jeſus, firſt for himſelf, and then for his murtherers. "They "ſtoned Stephen calling upon *God*, and ſaying, Lord "Jeſus receive my ſpirit——and he cried with a "loud voice, Lord lay not this ſin to their charge †." It is to be noted, that the word *God* is not in the original text; which might be better rendered thus, "They ſtoned Stephen invocating and ſaying &c." Jeſus therefore was the God, whom the dying martyr invocated in his laſt agonies; when men are apt to pray, with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs, to him whom they conceive the mightieſt to ſave.

6. It ſeems the holy Stephen, full as we are informed he was in thoſe trying moments, of the Holy Ghoſt, was not in the opinion, which you are pleaſed to impute to me, but you will obſerve that I diſclaim it, that "the proper object of prayer is God the Fa-"ther ‡." This you tell me I cannot but acknowledge. That the Father is *a* proper object of prayer, God forbid that ever I ſhould not acknowledge. That he is *the* proper object in the ſenſe in which you ſeem to make the aſſertion, in prejudice and excluſion of the other perſons, God forbid that ever I ſhould concede. I deny not, that there is an honour per-

* Acts vii. verſ. 57, 58. † Acts vii. verſ. 59, 60.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 81.

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ſonally due to him as the Father. There is alſo an honour perſonally due to the Son, as the Son; and to the Spirit, as the Spirit. But our knowledge of the perſonal diſtinctions is ſo obſcure, in compariſon of our apprehenſion of the general attributes of the Godhead, that it ſhould ſeem that the Divinity [the το θειον] is rather to be generally worſhipped in the three perſons jointly and indifferently, than that any diſtinct honours are to be offered to each ſeparately. Prayer however for ſuccour againſt external perſecution ſeems addreſſed with particular propriety to the Son.

7. When you deny, not only that any precept, but that any proper example is to be found in ſcripture to authorize the practice *, you ſeem to have forgotten, beſide many other paſſages, the initial ſalutations of St. Paul's epiſtles. St. Stephen's "ſhort "ejaculatory addreſs" you had not forgotten; but you ſay, "it is very inconſiderable †." But, Sir, why is it inconſiderable? Is it becauſe it was only an ejaculation? Ejaculations are often prayers of the moſt fervent kind; the moſt expreſſive of ſelf-abaſement and adoration. Is it for its brevity that it is inconſiderable? What then is the preciſe length of words, which is requiſite to make a prayer an act of worſhip? Was this petition preferred on an occaſion of diſtreſs, on which a Divinity might be naturally invoked? Was it a petition for a ſuccour, which none but a Divinity could grant? If this was the caſe it was ſurely an act of worſhip. Is the ſituation of the

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 81. † Ibid.

worſhipper

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worſhipper the circumſtance, which in your judgement, Sir, leſſens the authority of his example? You ſuppoſe perhaps ſome conſternation of his faculties ariſing from diſtreſs and fear. The Hiſtory juſtifies no ſuch ſuppoſition. It deſcribes the utterance of the final prayer, as a deliberate act of one who knew his ſituation, and poſſeſſed his underſtanding. After praying for himſelf, he kneels down to pray for his perſecutors: and ſuch was the compoſure with which he died, although the manner of his death was the moſt tumultuous and terrifying, that, as if he had expired quietly upon his bed, the ſacred Hiſtorian ſays, that "he fell aſleep *." If therefore you would inſinuate, that St. Stephen was not himſelf, when he ſent forth this "ſhort ejaculatory addreſs to Chriſt," the hiſtory refutes you. If he was himſelf, you cannot juſtify his prayer to Chriſt, while you deny that Chriſt is God, upon any principle that might not equally juſtify you, or me, in praying to the bleſſed Stephen. If St. Stephen in the full poſſeſſion of his faculties, prayed to him who is no God; why do we reproach the pious Romaniſt, when he chaunts the litany of his ſaints? If the perſuaſion of Chriſt's divinity prompted the holy martyr's dying prayer; then there is no room to doubt, but that the aſſertion of Chriſt's divinity was the blaſphemy, for which the Jews, hardened in their unbelief, condemned him.

8. ANOTHER inſtance, to which I ever ſhall appeal, of an early preaching of our Lord's divinity, tho' it may not conduce to your conviction, is the

* Acts vii. verſ. 60.

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ſtory of St. Paul's converſion: in which, as it is twice related by himſelf, Jeſus is deified in the higheſt terms. I know not, Sir, in what light this tranſaction may appear to you. To me, I confeſs, it appears to have been a repetition of the ſcene at the buſh, heightened in terror and ſolemnity. Inſtead of a lambent flame appearing to a ſolitary ſhepherd amid the thickets of the wilderneſs, the full effulgence of the Shechinah, overpowering the ſplendor of the mid-day ſun, burſts upon the commiſſioners of the Sanhedrim, on the public road to Damaſcus, within a ſmall diſtance of the city. Jeſus ſpeaks, and is ſpoken to, as the divinity inhabiting that glorious light. Nothing can exceed the tone of authority on the one ſide, the ſubmiſſion and religious dread upon the other. The recital of this ſtory ſeems to have been the uſual prelude to the Apoſtle's public apologies; but it only proved the means of heightening the reſentment of his incredulous countrymen.

9. THESE inſtances, Sir, will, bear me out in the aſſertion, that our Lord's divinity was preached from the very beginning, till you can fix the firſt diſcovery to ſome later epoch. I am therefore not at all concerned in the ſolution of your firſt queſtion.

10. THE ſecond, "when was the knowledge of "our Lord's divinity firſt imparted to the minds of "the Apoſtles," is wholly inſignificant, and unintereſting to all parties. It concerns not me; becauſe, with my notions of inſpiration, I am obliged to believe what the inſpired Apoſtles taught, however late the time might be when they themſelves received

received their information. It concerns not you; becauſe with your notions of inſpiration, you are at liberty to diſpute what the inſpired Apoſtles taught, whatever pretenſions they may have to the earlieſt information. If the knowledge was infallible which they received from inſpiration, it matters not how late; if not infallible, it matters not how early they received it. If no poſitive proof were extant, that the deity of Chriſt was an article of faith among the firſt Chriſtians; the difficulty of aſſigning the preciſe time, when the Apoſtles were firſt made acquainted with it, might be ſomething of an objection againſt the antiquity of the doctrine, and againſt it's truth. But in oppoſition to direct proof the objection, were it founded, could have no weight.

11. Upon this queſtion therefore, as the former, you muſt not take it amiſs if I leave you to yourſelf. Chooſe any time, within the compaſs of each apoſtle's life, for the epoch of his illumination. I will hold no argument upon the ſubject: although I have an opinion upon the queſtion, as upon the former, which I ever ſhall inculcate in my own congregation: and this, Sir, happens to be the very reverſe of that, which you imagine I muſt allow. You muſt allow, you ſay to me, that at firſt "the Apoſtles were wholly ignonorant of this*." *At firſt* indeed, before their acquaintance with our Lord, or at leaſt with the Baptiſt, they were ignorant, I believe, of every thing. But from their firſt acknowledgement of our Lord as the Meſſiah, they equally acknowledged his divi-

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 56.

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nity. Their faith, I believe, was but unſettled, as their notions of the Meſſian's kingdom were certainly very confuſed, till the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt. But ſo far as they believed in Jeſus as the Meſſiah, in the ſame degree they underſtood and acknowledged his divinity. The proof, which I have to produce of this from holy writ, conſiſts of too many particulars, to be diſtinctly enumerated in the courſe of our preſent correſpondence. I ſhall mention two; which to any but a decided Unitarian, will be very ſtriking; Nathaniel's firſt profeſſion, and Peter's conſternation at the miraculous draught of fiſhes. It was in Nathaniel's very firſt interview with our Lord, that he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the "Son of God! thou art the king of Iſrael!*." And this declaration was drawn from Nathaniel by ſome particulars in our Lord's diſcourſe, which he ſeems to have interpreted as indications of Omniſcience. When Simon Peter ſaw the number of fiſhes taken at a ſingle draught, when the net was caſt at our Lord's command, after a night of fruitleſs toil; "he fell down at the knees of Jeſus, ſay-"ing, depart from me for I am ſinful man, O "Lord†." Peter's conſternation was evidently of the ſame ſort, of which we read in the worthies of earlier ages upon any extraordinary appearance of the light of the Shechinah; which was founded on a notion, that a ſinful mortal might not *ſee God and live*. Theſe and many other paſſages of the Evangelical Hiſtory diſcover, that our Lord's aſ-

* John 1. verſ. 49. † Luke. v. 8.

ſociates

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ſociates, although it was not till after his aſcenſion that the Holy Ghoſt led them into all truth, had an early apprehenſion of ſomething more than human in his character. Nor indeed were early intimations of it wanting; in the firſt annunciation of his birth by the angelic hoſt; in the Baptiſt's declarations; and in our Lord's own aſſertions of a power to forgive ſins, and of an authority to diſpenſe with ordinances of divine appointment; and in his claim to be the proper Son of God, which the unbelieving Jews ever underſtood as an expreſs deification of his own perſon.

12. But Judas Iſcariot, you think, "could not "poſſibly have formed a deliberate purpoſe of be-"traying our Lord *," had the belief of his divinity been general among the Apoſtles before his crucifixion. Or had any ſuch pretenſion been ſet up, which had not gained belief, Judas would have taken advantage of the impoſition, and would have made a diſcovery of it to the prejudice of our Lord. It ſhould ſeem, Sir, that you think your own cauſe almoſt deſperate, if you would deſire that Judas Iſcariot ſhould be admitted as an evidence for you, or as an advocate. But what if your cauſe ſhould turn out to be, what Judas Iſcariot himſelf would ſcruple to undertake. I would not willingly be the apologiſt of that traitor. But I am inclined to think, that, traitor as he was, his intentions went not to the miſchief which he effected. It was rather perhaps his meaning to cheat the Chief

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 58.

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Prieſts of their money, than actually to ſell his Maſter's life. When he bargained to lead them for a certain ſum to the place of our Lord's retirement; he thought perhaps that he might ſafely truſt to his Maſter's power to repell any attack upon his perſon. This is very conſiſtent with a belief of our Lord's divinity; as the moſt diſhonourable deſigns are often found to conſiſt with the trueſt ſpeculative principles. That he meant not the miſchief which enſued, may be preſumed from the remorſe which followed, and the vengeance which in deſpair he executed upon himſelf. But I care little about his teſtimony. Only I think, that, with the Devils he might believe and tremble, and trembling might be ſtill a Devil.

13. After all, Sir, I might have ſpared ſo particular an anſwer as I have given to your fifth letter. In the concluſion of it, you furniſh me with a ſhort reply, of which I might have availed myſelf. "Had "there been any pretence, you ſay, for imagining "that the Jews in our Saviour's time had any know-"ledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, and taht they "expected the ſecond perſon in it, in the character "of their Meſſiah, the queſtion I propoſe to you "would have been needleſs*." Then, Sir, the queſtion which you propoſe to me, is needleſs. The Jews in Chriſt's days had notions of a trinity in the divine Nature. They expected the ſecond perſon, whom they called the Logos, to come as the Meſſiah. For the proof of theſe aſſertions I refer you to the work of the learned Dr. Peter Allix, entitled the "*Judgement of the ancient Jewiſh church againſt the*

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 64.

Unitarians."

" *Unitarians.*" A work which it is to be hoped, Sir. you will carefully *look through*, before you ſend abroad your intended view of the doctrine of the firſt ages concerning Chriſt *. That you will be convinced by Dr. Allix's proof, I have indeed little hope. I ſhall produce however another authority, to which you will perhaps be more inclined to pay regard: the authority of a learned Unitarian of the laſt century, who wrote in vindication of a former Unitarian work, of great fame, called the *The Naked Goſpel.* The Naked Goſpel, you know, was printed at Oxford in the year 1690, and was burnt the ſame year by order of the convocation. The anonymous author of the *Hiſtorical Vindication* was ſuppoſed to be Le Clerc. He it is, who ſays in his preface, that the platonic enthuſiaſm crept firſt into the Jewiſh, afterwards into the Chriſtian church. Then he tells his readers how the Jews picked up their Platoniſm. Of which, he ſays, the principal doctrines were two: the one, that of the Pre-exiſtence of Souls; the other that of the Divine Trinity. Theſe, he ſays, were the opinions of the Jews in the days of our Saviour and his Apoſtles: and hence perhaps it hath come to paſs, that, as the learned have obſerved, certain platonic phraſes and expreſſions are to be found in the New Teſtament, eſpecially in St. John's Goſpel. You, Sir, and this Unitarian brother ſeem to agree but ill in your notions of the doctrine of the firſt ages. He thought the doctrine of the Trinity one of the ancient corruptions of Judaiſm; which in laying the foundations of Chriſ-

* Preface to Letters, p. xviii.

tianity

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tianity, the heaven-taught builders ſome how or other forgot to do away. You have diſcovered, "that every notion of the trinity, whatever may be "fancied with reſpect to more antient times, was "obliterated from the minds of the Jews in our "Saviour's time*." I believe, Sir, I ſhall never ſit down to the taſk, which you deſire me to undertake; a tranſlation of the works of Biſhop Bull†. For as his argument is not for the unlearned, the labour would be thrown away. A work which might be more generally edifying, and in which I might engage, if it were not that I really grudge every moment which I give to controverſy, would be a harmony of the Unitarian Divines.

14. You will aſk me, whence was the offence which the aſſertion of our Lord's divinity, by my own confeſſion, gave the Jewiſh people, if divinity made a part of their own notion of the Meſſiah's character? I anſwer, the deification of the Meſſiah was not that which gave offence, but the aſſertion that a crucified man was that divine perſon: and before his crucifixion, the meanneſs of his birth gave an offence, leſs in degree, but of the ſame kind.

I am, &c.

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 64.

† Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 113.

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In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's ſixth.—Dr. Prieſtley's ignorance of the true principles of Platoniſm appears in his diſquiſitions concerning matter and ſpirit.—The equality and unity of the three principles of the Platoniſts.—Dr. Prieſtley's peculiar ſenſe of the word perſonification *not perceived either by the Archdeacon. or the Reviewer.—The outline however of Dr. Prieſtley's work not miſrepreſented by the Archdeacon. —The converſion of an attribute into a ſubſtance differs not from a creation out of nothing.—Never taught by the Platoniſts—The eternity of the Logos independent of any ſuppoſed eternity of the world.— Not diſcarded therefore by the converted Platoniſts —Dr. Prieſtley's arguments from the analogy between the divine Logos and human reaſon anſwered.— The Archdeacon abides by his aſſertion that Dr. Prieſtley hath miſrepreſented the platonic language.— The Archdeacon's interpretation of the Platoniſts reſts not on his own conjecture, but on the authority of Athenagoras—confirmed by other authorities.— Dr. Prieſtley's quotations from Tertullian conſidered —from Lactantius.*

DEAR SIR,

YOU muſt forgive me, if I confeſs to you, that that ſo long ſince as when I firſt red your diſquiſitions concerning matter and ſpirit, I formed no very high opinion of your learning in the Platonic philoſophy. What gave me my firſt ſuſpicion, as I well remember, was a ſurprize which you expreſs, that LETTER XIII.

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that a certain French writer ſhould ſpeak of the idea of a circle as itſelf not round *, and of the ideas of extended things as not extended. Your apprehenſion, that ideas could not be diviſible, unleſs they were extended†, heightened my ſuſpicion: which became ſomething more than ſuſpicion when I found you ſpeaking of the ſoul's need of *a repoſitory for her ideas* ‡ *eſpecially during ſleep*; as if ideas were things to be locked up, with our china, in a cupboard. Dr. Prieſtley, I ſaid to myſelf, confounds ideas with the impreſſions of external objects on the material ſenſory: which impreſſions are in truth as much external to the mind, as the objects which make them. What pity, that he hath not been more converſant with the Platoniſts! Theſe previous indications, of your deficiency in this branch of learning, in ſome meaſure prepared me for what I was to find in your *Hiſtory of the philoſophical doctrine concerning the ſoul*; inſomuch, that I red your aſſertion, that "Plato's phi- "loſophy was the oriental ſyſtem with very little "variation §," without indignation; becauſe I conſidered it as the reproach of an enemy, whom better information might make a friend. I was indeed ſurprized at your want of information in this particular inſtance; becauſe Moſheim, whoſe authority, as an hiſtorian, you ſeem to hold in due reſpect, indiſpoſed as he is in general to be partial to the Platoniſts, hath however ſo far done them juſtice, as to point out the total diſcordance, in principle at leaſt, between the ſober philoſophy of Plato and the extravagancies of

* Diſquiſitions, p. 39. † Ibid. p. 37, 38. ‡ Ibid. 79, 93. § Ibid. p. 274.

the

the Gnoſtics; whoſe principles were thoſe of the oriental ſyſtem. After this, Sir, it gives me no ſurprize at all, that you ſhould now aſſert, "that it was "never imagined that the three component members "of the Platonic Trinity are either equal to each other, "or ſtrictly ſpeaking one*." They are, Sir, more ſtrictly ſpeaking one, than any thing in nature of which unity may be predicated. No one of them can be ſuppoſed without the other two. The ſecond and third being, the firſt is neceſſarily ſuppoſed: and the firſt [Αγαθον) being, the ſecond and third, [Νους & Ψυχη] muſt come forth. Concerning their equality, I will not ſay that the Platoniſts have ſpoken with the ſame accuracy, which the Chriſtian fathers uſe; but they include the three principles in the divine nature, in the το Θειον; and this notion implies the ſame equality, which we maintain; at the ſame time I confeſs, that the circumſtance of their equality was not always ſtrictly adhered to by the younger platoniſts, for reaſons which I have explained †.

2. The want of perſpicuity is a fault in writing, of which indeed, Sir, you are little guilty. It is the more extraordinary, that your *perſonification* of the Logos ſhould not be diſtinctly underſtood, either by myſelf, or by my learned ally. For my own part, I confeſs, I had not the leaſt apprehenſion, that you uſed the word *perſonification* in any other than its uſual ſenſe; till, in your reply to the animadverſions of my learned ally, you diſtinguiſhed between the perſonification of the Logos, which you impute to Juſtin,

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 99. † See Charge V. § 5.

and

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and the earlier doctrines of the Gnoſtics*. By perſonification I had no ſuſpicion that you meant any thing more than a grammatical *proſopopeia*; which you ſeemed to think had been uſed both by Plato and St. John, in ſpeaking of the divine attribute of wiſdom. Certainly, Sir, you expreſs yourſelf in your hiſtory, as if you thought, that a literal acceptation of ſuch figured language was the occaſion, that a meer attribute was miſtaken for a real perſon, firſt in the Academy, and afterwards in the Church: and that this error led to another, ſtill founded on a literal interpretation of figurative expreſſions; the expreſſions in which St. John deſcribes, as you conceive the extraordinary degree in which wiſdom and power were conferred on Chriſt, being underſtood as aſſertions that Chriſt was that very perſon, which was ſuppoſed to have been previouſly deſcribed by the evangeliſt as a branch of the divinity. I thought, Sir, that you conceived that a meer grammatical *proſopopeia* had been, in this way, the firſt ſtep towards the deification of Chriſt. Upon looking again into the ſecond ſection of your hiſtory, I ſee no great reaſon to be aſhamed of my miſtake. I believe, Sir, that without the aſſiſtance of the comment, which your Reply to the Monthly Reviewer furniſhes, no reader of your work would diſcover any other meaning in your expreſſions. It ſeems, however, that the word *perſonification* is a new term of theology, invented by you, for a doctrine which is alſo of your own invention; though you are pleaſed to give the credit

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, §. 5.

of

of it to the platonic fathers: the doctrine of the converſion of an attribute into a perſon; which was ſuppoſed, you ſay, by its firſt advocates to take place immediately before the creation of the world, but being afterwards "carried farther back, namely to all "eternity, it led to the preſent doctrine of the Tri-"nity *." The diſtinction between this perſonification of the Logos and the earlier doctrines of the Gnoſtics is, it ſeems, an important feature in the great outline of your work. The outline of your work, as ſketched by yourſelf, is briefly this. The exaltation of the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt began with the Gnoſtics; who maintained the pre-exiſtence of human ſouls. When their errors were exploded, the perſonification was adopted. The Arian doctrine was ſubſequent to this; and it was after all theſe, that, from improvements upon the doctrine of perſonification, the preſent doctrine of the Trinity was brought out †. It is a heavy accuſation againſt my learned ally and me, that we have not ſufficiently attended to theſe diſtinctions; and the omiſſion ſhews, that, "we have never formed a right con-"ception of what we undertook to exhibit ‡."

3. EVERY writer muſt be allowed to be the beſt interpreter of his own expreſſions. But in the ſenſe in which I am now taught to underſtand the perſonification of the Logos, I cannot perceive, Sir, with

* Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 34, 35. † Ibid.
‡ Ibid. p. 35. and Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 66.

what

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what propriety it is called the firſt ſtep towards the deification of Chriſt; ſince the doctrines of the Gnoſtics, which you maintain to be more antient, had, in your judgment, the ſame tendency. I am ſometimes inclined to ſuſpect, that you are apt yourſelf to fluctuate between your own and the vulgar ſenſe of perſonification.

4. But although I ſhould allow, that I miſſed the ſenſe of a particular expreſſion; I am not ſenſible, that I miſconceived, or miſrepreſented, your account of the antient opinions. You certainly make the Unitarian doctrine the general opinion of the firſt Chriſtians. In the ſecond age you allow, that ſomething of divinity was aſcribed to Chriſt; but you think it was a divinity of an inferior kind, including neither neceſſity, nor eternity, of a diſtinct perſonal exiſtence. I therefore miſrepreſented not the great outline of your work, when I ſaid that the firſt race of Chriſtians were, in your opinion, Unitarians in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word; the ſecond, Arians*. This is the ſum of your account, ſtated not in your words, but in my own. You complain however that I "have miſconceived your idea †." You inform me that "the platonizing Chriſtians were not "Arians. That it is well known that they were not "Arians, but the orthodox who platonized ‡."

5. Sir, I am very ſenſible that the platonizers of the ſecond century were the orthodox of that age. I

* Charge I. § 1. † Letters to Dr. H. p. 66.
‡ Ibid.

have

have not denied this. On the contrary, I have endeavoured to ſhew that their platoniſm brings no imputation upon their orthodoxy. The advocates of the catholic faith, in modern times, have been too apt to take alarm at the charge of platoniſm. I rejoice and glory in the opprobrium. I not only confeſs, but I maintain, not a perfect agreement, but ſuch a ſimilitude, as ſpeaks a common origin, and affords an argument in confirmation of the catholic doctrine, from its conformity to the moſt antient and univerſal traditions. Nor is this the only article, in which heathen antiquity, however you may ſlight the argument, by the veſtiges, which are to be traced even in idolatrous rites, of the patriarchal hiſtory and the patriarchal creed, bears its teſtimony to revelation. But, Sir, I well know that theſe platonizers of the ſecond century were far more antient than Arius: nor did I mean to charge you with the abſurdity of maintaining a contrary opinion. I thought that the notion which you expreſs, of what was orthodoxy in the ſecond century, was conveyed in a ſingle word; when it was ſaid, that you repreſent the Chriſtians of the ſecond race as Arians; that is, as Arians in belief; becauſe the divinity which you ſuppoſe to have been aſcribed by them to Chriſt, was only of that ſecondary ſort, which Arius and his followers, in a later age, allowed. But to convict me of an error in this repreſentation of your opinion, you now ſet up a diſtinction, between the opinions which you would aſcribe to the early Platoniſts and the Arian tenets. "The Logos of the platonizers, you ſay, was an at-

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" tribute of the father, and not any thing that was " created out of nothing, as the Arians held Chriſt to " have been *." However, when this diſtinction hath ſerved the purpoſe of convicting me of one error, it is cleared away again to convict me of another. This Logos of the Platoniſts, I am told, " was ori- " ginally nothing more than a property of the divine " mind, which aſſumed a ſeparate perſonal character " in time †." This is the ſame notion which is expreſſed in your hiſtory in theſe words. " All the " early fathers ſpeak of Chriſt as not having exiſted " always, except as reaſon exiſts in man, viz. as an " attribute of the Deity ‡." And the aſſumption of a perſonal character, ſeems to be the ſame thing, which in your hiſtory you call " the converſion of a meer " attribute into a thinking ſubſtance §." Indeed, it is not eaſy to conceive, how a perſonal character may be aſſumed, otherwiſe than by being made a perſon. Now, what the difference may be between a making out of nothing, and the converſion of a meer attribute into a ſubſtance; or how a perſon made out of an attribute may differ from a perſon made out of nothing; I would rather, Sir, that you than I ſhould take the trouble to explain. If this was the difference between the doctrines of the early platonizers and the Arians, and this is the whole difference which you put between them, they might paſs, I think, for the ſame: and your account of the platonic orthodoxy was not miſrepreſented by me, when I ſaid that you made it

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 66. † Ibid. p. 72.
‡ Hiſt. of Corrupt. p. 42. § —— p. 40.

he

the ſame thing, the ſame in form not in time, with Arianiſm. LETTER XIII.

6. But, Sir, I maintain that this is an erroneous and injurious account of the Platonic Chriſtians. This converſion of an attribute into a ſubſtance was never taught by them; nor by any except the Sabellians, and thoſe earlier viſionaries deſcribed by Juſtin Martyr, who imagined occaſional emiſſions and abſorptions of the divine Logos. "Which opinion "(you ſay) was not very remote from the Uni-"tarian doctrine*." I am happy, Sir, to be informed by you, that the Unitarian doctrine approaches to opinions ſo myſterious. I thought, that to be clear of myſteries had been its particular recommendation. I now find, that were I even to turn Unitarian, I ſhould have myſteries to digeſt: and myſteries much too hard for my digeſtion. I will therefore, adhere to my creed; in which I know no myſtery to be compared with this notion, of a thing which may be a perſon and no perſon by fits and ſtarts. But for any production of the Logos, by a converſion, either permanent or occaſional, of an attribute into a thinking ſubſtance; I ſtill maintain, that, were the thing conceivable, the Platoniſts were likely to be the laſt to adopt it: becauſe a created Logos, to uſe my former expreſſion, had been no leſs an abſurdity in the academy, than it is an impiety in the church: and the notion, that this doctrine took its riſe among the

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 73.

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Platoniſts, betrays an entire ignorance of the genuine principles of their ſchool *.

7. You tell me, that "I diſcover in theſe animadverſions a total ignorance of what you have aſſerted.—That you have no-where ſaid, that either "the Platoniſts, or the Platonizing Chriſtians, held, "that the Logos was created, or that it had ever not "exiſted†." What then have you ſaid? You ſaid in your Hiſtory, that "All the early Fathers ſpeak of "Chriſt as not having exiſted always, except as—— "an attribute of the deity‡:" that they taught "the "converſion of this attribute into a ſubſtance§." And what is it you ſay now? You ſay now that the Platonizing Chriſtians held, that "whereas the Lo-"gos was originally nothing more than a property of "the divine mind, it aſſumed a ſeparate perſonal cha-"racter in time‖." Be pleaſed, Sir, to explain the difference between this converſion of attribute into ſubſtance, or property into perſon, and a creation out of nothing.

8. You admit however, that the eternity of the Logos was a doctrine of Platoniſm; but you attempt to aſſign a reaſon, why the converted Platoniſts, when they entered into the church, muſt have parted with this opinion. "The Logos (you ſay) of the Pla-

* Charge, IV. §4. † Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 72.
‡ Hiſtory of Corrnptions, p. 42. § Ibid. p. 40.
‖ Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 72.

"toniſts

" toniſts had, in their opinion, always had a per-
" ſonal exiſtence, becauſe Plato ſuppoſed creation to
" have been eternal; but this was not the opinion of
" the Platonizing Chriſtians, who held, that the
" world was not eternal; and therefore, retaining as
" much of Platoniſm as was conſiſtent with that doc-
" trine, they held, that there was a time when the
" Father was *alone*, and without a Son *." Sir, if I thought proper to deny your aſſertion, that Plato ſuppoſed creation to have been eternal; it would require much more ſkill in the Platonic Philoſophy, than is to be gotten at ſecond hand from modern authors, who pretend to give an account of it, to confute the proof which I might bring to the contrary from Plato's own writings. But as the younger Platoniſts generally held the eternity of creation, and Plato in ſome parts of his writings ſeems to favour that opinion, notwithſtanding what he ſays to the contrary in the Timæus; I ſhall take no advantage of the uncertainty of your aſſumption. Indeed it would be ſufficient for your purpoſe, were your argument found in other parts, that the opinion of the world's eternity was current in that ſchool in which the Chriſtian Platoniſts were trained, and was probably entertained by them all before their converſion. Still your concluſion will not ſtand, unleſs you can prove, that the Platoniſts, whether Chriſtian or Pagan, held the Logos to be a part of the world, or thought the eternity of the Logos a conſequence only of the

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 72.

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world's eternity. Whereas neither the one nor the other of theſe principles would have been allowed, even by thoſe Platoniſts who deemed the world eternal. The eternity of the world ſeemed to them a conſequence of that eternal activity, which they aſcribed to the deity: that is, to the three principles of Goodneſs [Τ'αγαθον], Intelligence [Νους], and Vitality [Ψυχη]: and chiefly to the two laſt. For to the firſt principle they inſcribed indeed an activity, but of a very peculiar kind; ſuch as might be conſiſtent with an undiſturbed immutability. He acts, μενων εν ἑαυτῳ ἠθει, by a ſimple indiviſible unvaried energy; which, as it cannot be broken into a multitude of diſtinct acts, cannot be adapted to the variety of external things; on which therefore the Firſt Good acts not, either to create or to preſerve them, otherwiſe than through the two ſubordinate principles. The eternal activity therefore of the Deity, and by conſequence the exiſtence of Intellect and the Vital principle, in which alone the divine nature is active upon external things, was neceſſary in this ſyſtem to the eternity of the world. And this eternal activity was ſuppoſed to be the conſequence of that goodneſs of the deity, which could not ſuffer that to be delayed, which, becauſe he hath done it, appears to be fit to be done. The world therefore, however the fact may actually be, might or might not have been eternal. If it hath been eternal; it hath been ſuch, not by its own nature, but by the choice of a free agent, who might have willed the contrary. But Intellect and the Vital principle have been eternal by neceſſity, as branches of the divinity. Theſe therefore

fore muſt have been eternal, even if the world had never been, although the world could not be without them; and this, upon the principles of thoſe philoſophers who deemed the world eternal. The converted Platoniſts therefore, when upon the authority of revelation they diſcarded the notion of the world's eternity, would not find themſelves obliged to diſcard with this the eternity of Intellect or the Logos: for that ſtands upon another ground, and is indeed eternity of quite another kind.

9. But whatever they might be at liberty to do, you are confident of the fact, that the eternal exiſtence of the Logos, as a perſon, is a notion which was diſcarded by the Chriſtian Platoniſts, when they became Chriſtian. Your proof is drawn from the analogy which ſome of them imagined between the divine Logos, and the reaſon of the human ſoul, or between the Logos and human ſpeech; and from the doctrine of the converſion of an attribute into a ſubſtance, which you perſuade yourſelf they deliver in the moſt unequivocal language.

10. "That the Logos of the Father, the ſame "that conſtituted the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, "exactly correſponded to the Logos, or reaſon, or "word of man, was the idea of Athanaſius him-"ſelf*." In proof of this aſſertion you bring a paſſage from Athanaſius, in which, to prevent as it ſhould ſeem a concluſion which the unwary might draw from the agreement of the name, inſtead of the

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 69.

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exact correſpondence which you may imagine, he ſhews the great difference between the divine Logos and human ſpeech. Tertullian, in a paſſage cited in your hiſtory *, ſets up ſomething of an analogy between the divine Logos and the human reaſon. This analogy, if I miſtake not, hath been purſued by the ſchoolmen with their peculiar ſubtlety; and, as far as it obtains, is well explained by the learned Dr. Charles Leſlie, in his dialogues intitled *The Socinian Controverſy diſcuſſed.* Tertullian, to prevent the very concluſion which you draw from this analogy, that the Logos was at ſome time or another a meer attribute, remarks, that nothing empty and unſubſtantial can proceed from God; for the divine nature admitting neither quality nor accident every thing belonging to it muſt be ſubſtance. This argument is ably ſtated in the work juſt mentioned, the dialogues of the learned Dr. Leſlie.

11. For the converſion of an attribute into a ſubſtance, I abide by my aſſertion, that it is the offſpring of your own imagination; and can only have ariſen from a miſapprehenſion of the language of the Platonic fathers. It is true, that they ſpeak of the Son's generation as taking place at a particular time, as commencing indeed with the creation. But by this generation they underſtood not any beginning of his perſonal exiſtence, but the projection of his energies; the diſplay of his powers in the production of external ſubſtances.

* Hiſtory of Corruption, p. 38.

12. You

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12. You reply, "that any meer external diſplay "of powers ſhould ever be termed generation, is ſo "improbable, from its manifeſt want of analogy to "any thing that ever was called generation before or "ſince; that ſuch an abuſe of words is not to be "ſuppoſed of theſe writers, or of any perſon without "very poſitive proof; and, in this caſe," you ſay to me, "you advance nothing but a meer conjecture, "deſtitute of any thing that can give it a colour of "probability*." This ſentence, Sir, only finiſhes the proof, if it was before defective, of your incompetency in the ſubject. It ſhews that you have ſo little acquaintance with Platoniſm, that your mind cannot readily apprehend a Platonic notion, when it is clearly ſet before you. What you take for my meer conjecture is the expreſs aſſertion of Athenagoras, in the very paſſage which you have quoted: and Athenagoras, I ſhould think, might be a ſufficient evidence of his own meaning. He ſays, that the Son was called the Son as being the firſt offspring of the Father—not becauſe he was ever made, but becauſe he went forth to act upon material ſubſtances †. He explains the generation of the Son, by declaring firſt what it ſignifies not; then, what is ſignifies. A making it ſignifies not; a going forth, according to Athenagoras, it ſignifies. That the generation of the Son of God is ſomething figuratively called a generation, will hardly be denied. Athenagoras declares what he underſtood by the figure; and the interpretation which he puts upon it, ſeems to have been

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 70.

† See Charge, IV. § 5.

general

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general among the writers who came from the ſame ſchool. It reſts not however upon any conjecture, but upon his authority; the fault, Sir, is not in me, if you cannot perceive his meaning when it is rendered in our own language. You object a want of analogy, between the figure and the thing which it is ſuppoſed to repreſent. This, I think, with an Unitarian ſhould be but a ſlight objection: ſince the whole language of the New Teſtament, in their view of it, is made up of figures in which analogy is wanting. But the queſtion is not what may be the natural ſenſe of the word generation, when it is applied to the Son of God, or what may be its true ſenſe when it is ſo applied in Scripture; but in what ſenſe it was accepted by the Platonizing Chriſtians. I affirm, upon the authority of Athenagoras, that it was underſtood by them, when they ſpeak of it as taking place at a certain time, not of a beginning of the Son's exiſtence, but of a diſplay of his powers. To confute this aſſertion, inſtead of critical reaſoning upon the propriety of the language, you muſt produce ſome better authority upon your own ſide, than that of Athenagoras, whoſe teſtimony is expreſs and full on mine.

13. But for the ſenſe which theſe Platoniſts put upon the word generation, I am not ſollicitous to defend it. I have ſpoken of it in my Charge as a conceit; and I have ſpoken of the attempt, to put a determinate ſenſe upon a figurative expreſſion, of which no particular expoſition can be drawn from holy

holy writ, as highly presumptuous *. Still, Sir, the Platonists are not without a defence, against what you have found to object to the propriety of the expression, in the sense in which they understand it. You say to me, "Since according to your hypothesis the "Logos was always an intelligent person, he must "have exerted his intellectual faculties in some way "or other from all eternity, as much as the Father "himself †." It is true, Sir. But it was not an exertion of his faculties *in some way or other*, but the first exertion of them on external things that the Platonic Fathers understood by generation. This was the exertion in which the Son came forth. Before this he energized only within himself: he lay, as it were, unissued in the bosom of the Father. You go on ——"was the exertion of the faculties of the Father "in the creation of the world ever called a generati-"on of the Father?——and yet, according to you, "this language must have been equally proper with "respect to the Father ‡."——Not according to me, Sir. I hold with the Platonists, that the Father's faculties are not exerted on external things, otherwise than through the Son and Holy Ghost: these two persons being, as it were, the two faculties, in which alone the divine nature is active on created things. Although I approve not the attempt to determine the meaning of a figure, which the holy Scriptures leave undetermined; yet I cannot allow, that the language, in that interpretation of it which I ascribe to

* Charge, IV. § 6.

† Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 71. ‡ Ibid.

the

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the Platoniſts, is as improper of the Son as it would be of the Father. I perceive indeed no impropriety in it, as applied to the Son: I only complain of the want of authority from Holy Writ.

14. STILL I maintain, that the thing in queſtion is, not the propriety or impropriety of an expreſſion; but the fact, how an expreſſion was uſed and underſtood by certain writers. It were endleſs to accumulate authorities; but if the ſingle teſtimony of Athenagoras is not ſufficient, I will produce two more; to one of which at leaſt I expect that you will pay ſome regard, becauſe it is given by heretics. The firſt is that of Conſtantine the Great. The Emperor may be numbered among the platonizing Chriſtians; becauſe, as you have yourſelf obſerved, he alleges the authority of Plato in ſupport of the Catholic doctrine. Now Conſtantine the Great in his epiſtle to the Nicomedians, written after the Nicene council, uſes theſe expreſſions——"he was begotten, "or rather he himſelf came forth (being even ever "in the Father) for the ſetting in order of the things which were made by him*." Here the emperor expounds generation by coming forth; he thinks, "that he came forth," the more ſignificant expreſſion; and he aſſerts the eternal co-exiſtence of the Son and Father. The other teſtimony, on which I ſhould more rely for your conviction, if I could hope that any teſtimony might produce it, is that of Arius the Hæreſiarch, and the Prieſts and Deacons

* Εγενηθη, μαλλον δε προηλθεν αὐτος, καὶ παντοτε ἐν τῳ πατρι ὢν, ἐπὶ την τῶν ἀπ' αὐτȣ πεποιημενων διακοσμησιν.

of

of his faction. In their common letter to Alexander, Biſhop of Alexandria (the ſeat you know of the platonic ſchool) ſtating what they believed, and what they diſbelieved: among the articles which they diſbelieved is this; "that the Son previouſly exiſt-"ing was afterwards begotten *." And it is remarkable, that this ſtands laſt in a liſt of articles of diſbelief. In the preceding articles their diſbelief is juſtified, by a reference of the rejected propoſitions to certain Heretics, as the firſt authors of them; of one to Valentinus, of another to Manes, and another to Sabellius. But this article is not referred to any heretic; which argues that they were conſcious, that this was the opinion of the church. It is true they immediately ſubjoin, that "Alexander himſelf had often publicly declared againſt thoſe who introduced ſuch things;" as if this had been one of the things, which Alexander condemned. But the falſehood of this inſinuation appears from another epiſtle of Arius to Euſebius of Nicomedia, to whom as a friend the heretic may be ſuppoſed to write without art or diſguiſe. In this epiſtle he mentions the propoſition, "that "the Son is co-exiſtent with God without gene-"ration †," as one of the articles of Alexander's public doctrine, to which he could not give aſſent. You will find both theſe epiſtles, in Epiphanius's account of the Arians.

* ὡδε τον υἱλα προτερον ὑστερον γενηθεντα.

† Επειδη ὰ συμφωνεμεν ἀυἱῳ δημοσιᾳ λεγονἱι——συνπαρχει ὁ υἱος ἀγεννηἱως τῳ θεῳ.

15. From

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15. From theſe teſtimonies it is indiſputable, that the early Platoniſts; by the generation of the Son, when they ſpeak of it as taking place at a particular time, underſtand not any beginning of his exiſtence; and it appears that it was the language of the orthodox, at the time of the Nicene council, that the exiſtence of the Son was prior to his generation, and independant of it: coæval indeed with the eternal Father's. Later writers diſtinguiſh three generations: the incarnation; the going forth to the buſineſs of creation; and an eternal generation; which laſt is only a name for the unknown manner in which the Son's exiſtence is connected with the Father's. Tertullian, in the paſſage which you have quoted in your hiſtory *, which you call upon me ſo particularly to conſider †, only ſpeaks the language of his times, and never dreamed that he ſhould be underſtood to aſſert a beginning of the Son's exiſtence, when he ſaid, "that "the nativity of the word was perfected when God "ſaid, *Let there be Light.*"

16. You now, Sir, produce another paſſage of Tertullian to prove "how ready the Platonizing "Chriſtians were to revert to the idea of an attribute "of God in their uſe of the word Logos ‡." But the paſſage, inſtead of proving this readineſs of the platonizing Chriſtians, proves the readineſs of the pagan philoſophers to apply this ſame name to a perſon; even to the Maker of the Univerſe.

* Vol. I. p. 38——40. † Letters to Dr. H. p. 67.
‡ Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 76.

17. You

17. You call upon me to conſider alſo a paſſage cited in your Hiſtory from Lactantius, whoſe orthodoxy, you tell me, I cannot queſtion*. Sir, you are not more inaccurate in your citations from the antients, than unfortunate in your divinations about the principles of your contemporaries, and the conceſſions which they will be willing to make to you. The orthodoxy of Lactantius I ſhall queſtion, I ſhall deny. He had not perhaps the diſpoſitions of an heretic. He did not ſet himſelf to oppoſe, what he knew to be the approved doctrine of the church. But his talent was eloquence, which he poſſeſſed in a high degree, and his learning was in mythological antiquity. In Philoſophy his information was ſmall; in Divinity he was a child. The common places of Morality and Natural Religion he touches with elegance; and he inveighs againſt the pagan Superſtition in a maſterly ſtrain. But in his attempt to philoſophize, or to expound articles of faith, he is contemptible. In the ſeventh chapter of his firſt book he aſcribes a beginning to the exiſtence of the eternal Father. No wonder then that he ſhould aſcribe a beginning to the Son's exiſtence. You are welcome, Sir, to any advantage you may be able to derive from the authority of ſuch a writer.

16. I perſuade myſelf I have now ſhewn, that your objection to the catholic doctrine, founded on its ſuppoſed Platoniſm, and your argument for what I

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 76.

ſhall

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I am, &c.

LETTER FOURTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's Eighth.—The Archdeacon's ſuppoſition, that the firſt Ebionites worſhipped Chriſt, defended—His ſuppoſition, that Theodotus was the firſt perſon who taught the Unitarian doctrine at Rome, defended.

Dear Sir,

LETTER XIV. OF all my nine ſpecimens of inſufficient proofs ſelected from the firſt book of your Hiſtory, the fifth is the only one about which any doubt is likely to remain (except with yourſelf) that it was properly alleged. For the ſeventh and the ninth you give up: and the other ſix have been conſidered.

2. My Fifth ſpecimen was your miſrepreſentation of Euſebius, a writer of acknowledged veracity and candour, whom you very raſhly charge with inconſiſtency, and even with unfairneſs; becauſe in his account

account of Theodotus the hæreſiarch, who appeared at Rome about the year 190, he cites another writer, who ſays, that this Theodotus was the firſt who taught the meer humanity of Chriſt; whereas it appears from his own hiſtory, that the Ebionites, who held the meer humanity of Chriſt, were far more antient than Theodotus. Admitting the antiquity of the Ebionites, I maintain, that Euſebius is ſo eaſily reconciled with the author whom he cites, that the difference between them is no juſt ground to tax the veracity of either. It is very certain, that Theodotus maintained the meer humanity of Chriſt in the groſſeſt ſenſe: in that groſs and ſhocking ſenſe, in which it is at this day taught by yourſelf and Mr. Lindſey. It is not certain that the Ebionites, before Theodotus, had gone further than to deny our Lord's original divinity. They probably, like Socinus, admitted ſome unintelligible exaltation of his nature after his reſurrection, which rendered him the object of worſhip. If this was the caſe, Theodotus might juſtly claim the honour of being the firſt aſſertor of our Lord's humanity, being indeed the firſt who made humanity the whole of his condition. By this very natural ſuppoſition, that the Ebionites were Unitarians of a milder ſort than Theodotus, Euſebius might have been reconciled with himſelf, had it been his own aſſertion, that Theodotus was the firſt who taught the meer humanity of Chriſt *. LETTR XIV

3. But this is not the aſſertion of Euſebius, but of another writer cited by Euſebius. Now, ſince Theodotus broached his hereſy at Rome, it is very

* See Charge, I. § 16.

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probable, that the writer cited by Eusebius was a Roman, and that he treated of the state of religion in the western church, and especially at Rome: where Theodotus was probably the first, who, in any sense, taught the meer humanity of Christ *.

4. You tell me, in your eighth letter, that the difference which I put between Theodotus and Ebion is advanced upon my own authority †. Truly, Sir, I think that a supposition, which reconciles a writer of established credit with himself, or which is nearly the same thing, with another writer whom he cites with approbation, should need no great authority to support it; unless it be contrary to known fact, in which case indeed no authority might support it, or in itself improbable. Now, Sir, can you prove, that Christ was not worshipped by the original Ebionites? Can you prove this, I would ask, by explicit evidence? For as for that kind of proof, in which you so much delight, which is drawn by abstract reasoning from general and precarious maxims; it is of no more significance in history, than testimony would be in mathematics. To think to demonstrate a fact by syllogism is not less absurd, than to go about to establish a geometrical theorem by an *affidavit*. Excuse me, if I insist upon the difference, in the nature of things, between historic certainty and scientific truth. I apprehend an inattention to this distinction hath misledde many, and hath been the cause of much fruitless labour in many subjects. Scientific truth

* See Charge, p. 39.

† Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 103.

can

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can only be eſtabliſhed by abſtract reaſoning. Teſtimony can in ſcience produce nothing more than probability. In hiſtory it is quite the reverſe: abſtract reaſoning can never go beyond a probability: proof muſt ariſe from evidence. And the reaſon of this is plain. The principles of ſcientific truth are all within the mind itſelf; the truths of hiſtory are the occurrences of the external world. Neglecting this neceſſary diſtinction, the great Berkley queſtioned the exiſtence of the material world, becauſe he found it incapable of demonſtration; and I have known many ſeek a confirmation of geometrical theorems from experiment. Now to return to my ſubject; have you evidence, for that is the only proof to which, in this caſe, the judicious will attend; have you evidence, that Chriſt was not worſhipped by the Ebionites? If you have none, my ſuppoſition is not contrary to known fact. Is it in itſelf improbable, ſince all innovations have a progreſs, and the divinity of Chriſt was the belief, and the worſhip of Chriſt the practice of the firſt ages, that preſumptuous men would begin to queſtion the ground, on which his right to worſhip might be thought to ſtand, before they abandoned the worſhip to which they had been long habituated? Hath not this been the progreſs of the corruption (you will call it reformation, but I muſt ſpeak my own language) in later times; Socinus, although he denied the original divinity of our Lord, was nevertheleſs a worſhipper of Chriſt, and a ſtrenuous aſſertor of his right to worſhip. It was left to others to build upon the foundation which Socinus laid; and to bring the Unitarian doctrine

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to the goodly form, in which the preſent age beholds it.

5. But, Sir, my ſuppoſition is not only free from improbability; it is highly probable. Ebion in his notions of the redeemer, as I have already had occaſion to obſerve, ſeems to have been a meer Cerinthian. Epiphanius and Irenæus ſay, that he held the Cerinthian doctrine of a union of Jeſus with a ſuperangelic being. The Cerinthian doctrine was, that this union commenced at our Lord's baptiſm; was interrupted during the crucifixion and at the time of our Lord's interment, but reſtored again after his reſurrection: and being reſtored it rendered the man Jeſus an object of divine honours. As Epiphanius ſays in general of Ebion, that he held the Cerinthian doctrine concerning Chriſt, without ſpecifying parts that he received, and parts that he rejected; the probability is, that he received the whole; and of conſequence that he worſhipped Chriſt as a deified man, notwithſtanding that he denied his original divinity. This ſuppoſition of mine hath, you ſee, a probability of its own; which is quite diſtinct from that which accrues to it from its uſe in reconciling Euſebius with the hiſtorian that he quotes, and is founded on the acknowledged agreement of Ebion with Cerinthus.

6. For my other ſuppoſition, that Theodotus might be the firſt perſon who taught the Unitarian doctrine at Rome, you think it highly improbable; "becauſe Tertullian ſays, that in his time the Uni-

"tarians

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" tarians were the greater part of believers *." At Rome therefore, " where there was a conflux of all " religions, and of all ſects," the probability is little that there ſhould be no Unitarians. Sir, I will grant—I am liberal, I am ſure, in my conceſſions—I will grant, that Rome ſwarmed with Unitarians in the time of Tertullian. Not for the reaſon which you aſſign; that Tertullian ſays, the Unitarians were the majority of believers. For this Tertullian hath not ſaid; with whatever confidence you may aſcribe to him the dreams of Zwicker and his credulous diſciples. I muſt take the liberty to ſay, Sir, that a man ought to be accompliſhed in antient learning, who thinks he may eſcape, with impunity, and without detection, in the attempt to brow-beat the world with a peremptory and reiterated allegation of teſtimonies that exiſt not. But, Sir, although I deny that Tertullian ſays, that the Unitarians were in his time the majority of believers; yet I will grant, that they were numerous at Rome in the time of Tertullian. I profeſs I know not how numerous, or how few, they were. But to ſhew the ſtrength of my cauſe, ſince you are pleaſed to have it ſo, let them be numerous. How will their numbers affect my ſuppoſition, that Theodotus was the firſt perſon who at Rome taught the Unitarian doctrine? Might not this be, although the Unitarians ſwarmed at Rome in the time of Tertullian? Believe me, Sir, it well might be; for the times of Tertullian were the very times of Theodotus. About the year of our Lord

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 103.—See alſo p. 121---and Second Letters, p. 71.

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185 Tertullian embraced Chriſtianity. About the year of our Lord 190 came Theodotus the apoſtate, the tanner of Byzantium, preaching at Rome the doctrine of Antichriſt.

7. My learned ally has a third conjecture for the reconciling of Euſebius and his author. It is by no means neceſſary to our argument, that either of my ſuppoſitions, or that his, or that any particular conjecture which may be made upon the ſubject, ſhould be brought to a certainty. You tax Euſebius with want of candor and conſiſtency. The charge reſts upon an aſſumption, that what Euſebius relates of the antiquity of the Ebionites, and what his author affirms of the firſt aſſertion of our Lord's meer humanity by Theodotus, cannot be interpreted but in contradictory ſenſes. If we have ſhewn, by a variety of probable conjectures, that the two aſſertions admit conſiſtent interpretations, that each may be true in the ſenſe in which each writer underſtood himſelf, without contradiction of the other; the whole evidence of your accuſation is demoliſhed, and the charge of temerity and preſumption lies heavy on yourſelf for an attack, which you cannot ſupport with proof, upon the character of a grave and reſpectable hiſtorian.

I am, &c.

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LETTER FIFTEENTH.

In reply to Dr. Prieſtley's Seventh.—The metaphyſical difficulties ſtated by Dr. Prieſtly neither new nor unanſwerable.—Difficulties ſhort of a contradiction no objection to a revealed doctrine.—Difficulties in the Arian and Socinian doctrine.—The Father not the ſole object of worſhip.—Our Lord, in what ſenſe an image of the inviſible God and the firſt-born of every creature.—Not the deſign of the Evangeliſts to deliver a ſyſtem of fundamental principles.——The doctrine of the Trinity reſts on the general tenor of the ſacred writings.—The inference, that Chriſt is not God, becauſe the Apoſtles often ſpeak of him as man, invalid. —The inference, from the manner in which he ſometimes ſpeaks of himſelf, invalid.—The Athanaſians of the laſt age no Tritheiſts.

DEAR SIR,

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AFTER the declaration which I have made that I will not enter into a regular controverſy with you upon the ſubject of the Trinity, you will not wonder, if you receive only a general reply to ſome parts of your Seventh Letter. A particular anſwer to the ſeveral objections which it contains, would lead me into metaphyſical diſquiſitions; which I wiſh to decline, becauſe in that ſubject I foreſee that we ſhould want common principles and a common language. The queſtions which you propoſe

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in the ſecond and the fourth ſections of this letter, are not new, and have been anſwered. But if they were unanſwerable, what would be the inference? The inference would only be, that the doctrine of the Trinity hath its difficulties. And is it poſſible, that any doctrine concerning the nature of the Deity ſhould be without its difficulties? When the infinite diſtance is conſidered between Man and his Maker; it ſeems reaſonable to preſume, that there muſt be myſteries, far above the reach of the human underſtanding both in the nature of God; and in the plan of his government: that the fulleſt diſcovery that could be made, of God and of his ways, to the human intellect, muſt be imperfect; becauſe, however perfect in itſelf, it could be but imperfectly apprehended. No difficulties therefore, ſhort of a contradiction, can be allowed to conſtitute an objection to a doctrine claiming a divine original. On the contrary, it ſhould rather ſeem, that to involve difficulties muſt be one characteriſtic of a divine revelation; and its greateſt difficulties may reaſonably be expected to lie in thoſe parts, which immediately reſpect the nature of God and the manner of his exiſtence. If you would ſuppoſe the contrary, if you would inſiſt that a divine revelation, being intended for the general information of mankind, muſt be perſpicuous and free from difficulty; I would aſk, is Chriſtianity clear of difficulties in any of the Unitarian ſchemes; Hath the Arian hypotheſis no difficulty, when it aſcribes both the firſt formation and the perpetual government of the univerſe, not to the Deity but to an inferior being? Can any power or wiſdom, leſs than the ſupreme, be a ſufficient ground for the truſt we are required

required to place in providence? Make the wiſdom and the power of our ruler what you pleaſe; ſtill upon the Arian principle, it is the wiſdom and the power of a creature. Where then will be the certainty, that the evil, which we find in the world, hath not crept in through ſome imperfection in the original contrivance, or in the preſent management? Since every intellect, below the firſt, may be liable to error, and any power, ſhort of the ſupreme, may be inadequate to purpoſes of a certain magnitude. But if evil may have thus crept in, what aſſurance, can we have, that it will ever be extirpated? In the Socinian ſcheme, is it no difficulty, that the capacity of a meer man ſhould contain that wiſdom, by which God made the univerſe? Whatever is meant by *the Word* in St. John's Goſpel, it is the ſame Word of which the Evangeliſt ſays, that all things were made by it, and that it was itſelf made fleſh. If this Word be the divine attribute Wiſdom; then that attribute, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the univerſe, in this view of the ſcripture-doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a meer man, the ſon of a Jewiſh carpenter. A much greater difficulty, in my apprehenſion, than any that is to be found in the catholic faith *.

2. In

* In reply to this, Dr. Prieſtley ſays to me in the thirteenth of his Second Letters, ſect. 3. "Pray, Sir, what Socinian "ever maintained that the divine attribute wiſdom, in the "degree which was equal to the formation of the univerſe, was "conveyed entire into the mind of Jeſus Chriſt." I ſay, that St. John maintains it, if St. John was, what Dr. Prieſtley believes him to have been, a Socinian. It is maintained in the

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2. In the third ſection of your Seventh letter, you build an argument for the ſole deity of the Father, upon an aſſumption that he is the ſole object of worſhip. To this argument I have replied *. I deny the aſſumption. I cite the example of St. Stephen, whoſe laſt act of worſhip was addreſſed to Chriſt. You allege, on the other ſide, the example of our Saviour, who himſelf prayed to the Father; the authority of Origen; and I know not what early and univerſal practice. I reply, that our Saviour, as a man, owed worſhip to the Father. I maintain, that neither the authority of Origen, nor any univerſal practice of a later age, can outweigh the example of St. Stephen, were it ſingle; much leſs ſupported as it is by other examples of equal weight. The

the beginning of St. John's Goſpel, if the Evangeliſt's words be expounded in the true ſenſe by the Unitarians. The Word, which was with God from the beginning, according to St. John, was made fleſh. If the Word, which was made fleſh, was not the ſame Word which was in the beginning with God, by which all things were made, there is no meaning in the Evangeliſt's words, literal or figurative. The Word's being made fleſh, according to the Socinians, was only a communication of the word to the mind of Chriſt. What was communicated to the mind of Chriſt? That Word which was from the beginning, which made the world. Dr. Prieſtley ſays, this is more than the Unitarians believe. "What "we believe is——that a *portion* only of the ſame wiſdom, "which formed the univerſe, was communicated to Chriſt." It may be ſo. Far be it from me to tax Dr. Prieſtley, or his brethren, with a larger faith than they profeſs. But if they believe no more than Dr. Prieſtley in this paſſage acknowledges, they believe much leſs than St. John aſſerts in the moſt reduced ſenſe of his expreſſions.

* Letter XI.

worſhip

worſhip addreſſed to Chriſt by St. Stephen, and the Apoſtles, either proves the divinity of Chriſt, or it juſtifies the worſhip of the ſaints and martyrs in the Roman church; and they who live in countries, where the papal ſuperſtition is eſtabliſhed, may, without ſcruple, invocate St. Michael, St. Raphael, St. Abel, St. Abraham, St. Stephen, St. Sebaſtian, and all the ſaints, angelic, and human, Jewiſh and Chriſtian, of the Roman calendar.

3. THE text of St. Paul (Col. i. 15.) was produced by me*, not as the moſt explicit aſſertion that may be found in Scripture, of our Lord's divinity; but as an explicit aſſertion, that he is at leaſt ſomething much more than man, and that the univerſe was made by him. If the dignity of his nature were mentioned only in this ſingle paſſage, or were nowhere deſcribed by higher titles than thoſe which the Apoſtle uſes here, "the *image* of the inviſible God " and the *firſt-born* of every creature," divinity might ſeem more than is implied in them. But when we recollect the ſtronger expreſſions, which occur in other places; in particular St. Paul's aſſertion, that he was originally in the form of God, of which he emptied himſelf, to take the form of a ſervant, i. e. of a man; and when to all other proofs of the high dignity of his nature we add St. John's explicit doctrine of his eternity and Godhead; it muſt be very evident, that it could not be the intention of St. Paul, in this paſſage, to ſink the Son of God into the rank of a creature, or to ſeparate him from the

* Charge, p. 13.

divine

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divine nature. The force of St. Paul's deſcription in both its branches, lies rather in the adjectives, *inviſible* and *firſt-born*, than in the ſubſtantives, *image and creature*. The firſt branch of the deſcription, that "he is the image of the inviſible God," points to a circumſtance, upon which the early fathers dwell, as one of the principal perſonal diſtinctions: that it is in the perſon only of the Son that the glory of the Godhead can be rendered viſible. *For God*, in the perſon of the Father, *no man hath ſeen at any time* *. The Son is therefore an image of the inviſible deity; not as a likeneſs formed in a diſtinct ſubſtance, but as he, who in every inſtance of an immediate intercourſe between God and man, hath been the appearing perſon†. The ſecond branch of the deſcription holds out a diſtinction between birth and creation, which implies that the Son's exiſtence is dependent on the Father's, in ſome other manner than that in which any creature's exiſtence is dependent on its maker's. You muſt know, that the words in the original text, πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, are equivalent to theſe; ὁ τεχθεις προ πασης κτισεως, *he who was born or begotten before any creation*, or *before any thing was made*. "It is obſervable, (ſays Dr. Clarke) that St. Paul "does not here call our Saviour πρωτικτιστον πασης "κτισεως, *the firſt created of all creatures*, but "πρωτοτοκον πασης κτισεως, *the firſt-born of every crea-* "*ture*; the firſt begotten before all creatures."

* See John i. 18. and vi. 46.

† —— *image of the inviſible God*. "A lively deſcription "of the perſon of Chriſt; whereby we underſtand, that in "him only God ſheweth himſelf to be ſeen." Marginal note in Barker's quarto Bible, 1599.

4. I ALLOW, that "there is nothing that can be "called an *account* of the divine nature of Chriſt "in the goſpels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. "Luke *." But every one of the goſpels abounds with paſſages, in which it is ſo evidently implied, that no room is left to doubt, that the four Evangeliſts had but one opinion upon the ſubject. I cannot admit your poſition, that "each of the goſ- "pels was intended to be a ſufficient inſtruction in "the fundamental principles of the doctrine of "Chriſtianity †." Nothing ſeems to have been leſs the intention of any of the Evangeliſts, than to compoſe a ſyſtem of fundamental principles. Inſtruction in fundamentals in that age was orally delivered. The general deſign of the Evangeliſts ſeems to have been nothing more, than to deliver in writing a ſimple, unembelliſhed narrative of our Lord's principal miracles; to record the occurrences and actions of his life, which went immediately to the completion of the antient prophecies, or to the execution of the ſcheme of Man's redemption; and to regiſter the moſt intereſting maxims of Religion and Morality, which were contained in his diſcourſes. The principles of the Chriſtian religion are to be collected neither from a ſingle goſpel; nor from all the four goſpels; nor from the four goſpels with the acts and the epiſtles; but from the whole code of revelation, conſiſting of the canonical books of the Old and New Teſtament: and for any article of faith the authority of a ſingle writer,

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 91. † Ibid.

where

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where it is expreſs and unequivocal, is ſufficient. Had St. Paul related what he ſaw in the third heaven, I hope, Sir, you would have given him implicit credit, although the truth of the narrative muſt have reſted on his ſingle teſtimony.

5. I CANNOT however grant, that the general tenor of ſcripture ſuppoſes not ſuch a trinity, as I contend for*. I contend, that your doctrine is what ſtands upon particular texts; while the catholic faith is ſupported by the general tenor of the ſacred writings, and by the conſent of thoſe writings, in many parts, with an univerſal tradition of unexplored antiquity.

6. You aſk me, "why the doctrine of the Trinity, "if it be a truth, was not taught as explicitly in the "New Teſtament, as the doctrine of the divine unity "both in Old and New†?" And you ſay, that "many paſſages in ſcripture inculcate the doctrine "of the divine unity in the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt "manner‡." Be pleaſed, Sir, to produce one of the many. I know of no doctrine of the divine unity, taught either in the Old Teſtament or in the New, but the doctrine that Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, is the one true God, in oppoſition to the variety of imaginary gods worſhipped by the heathen§. Concerning the metaphyſical unity of the

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 87. † Ibid. p. 92.

‡ Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 93,

§ Το μεν γαρ θεον ὁμολογειν ἑνα, προς ἀντιδιαστολην τῆς ἑλληνων πολυθεου πλανης, πρωϊοι παρειληφασιν Ιουδαιων παιδες. Euſeb. Ecc. Theol. lib. i. c. 2.

divine

divine nature the ſcriptures are ſilent; except that by diſcovering a Trinity of perſons, they teach clearly what the Unity is not: namely, that it is not perſonal. If you imagine that the abſolute Unity of the divine ſubſtance is more eaſy to be explained than the Trinity, let me entreat you, Sir, to read the Parmenides. It is indeed in Plato's ſchool, if any where, that a man's eyes are likely to be opened to his own ignorance. Read the Parmenides—You will then perhaps perceive, that that Unity, which muſt be the foundation of all being, is itſelf of all things the moſt myſterious and incomprehenſible. I muſt know more of it than I do, before I can pretend to perceive, what is ſo clear to you, that you think that I cannot deny it, "that the doctrine of the Trinity "looks like an infringement of the Unity *."

7. THE argument contained in the ſeventh ſection of your ſeventh letter ſplits, I think, into three, reſting on the three different aſſumptions. The Apoſtles both in the book of Acts, and in their epiſtles uſually call Chriſt a Man; therefore they knew not that he was God; for the diſcovery would have changed their language †.

8. THEY ſpeak of him as a man in reaſoning and argumentation. Therefore he was a man ‡

9. THEY behaved to him as a man in their ordinary intercourſe with him; therefore they had no apprehenſion that he was God §.

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 92. † Ibid. p. 93.
‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 94. § Ibid. p. 93 & 94.

10. THEY

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10. To the two firſt arguments it is an anſwer, that according to the faith which I defend, Chriſt is truly a man as well as God. It is no wonder therefore that he ſhould be mentioned as a man, when nothing in the narrative, or in the argument, requires that his divinity ſhould be particularly brought to view.

11. To the firſt argument in particular it is a further anſwer, that it was the ſtile of all the ſacred writers, and it is the ſtile of all writers, to name things rather after their appearances than their internal forms. The tempter you know, in the Moſaic hiſtory of the fall, is called the ſerpent; and is not once mentioned by any other name. The three angels, who appeared to Abraham in the form of men, are called men throughout the ſtory.

12. To the ſecond argument in particular it is a further anſwer, that as the ſcheme of man's redemption required the incarnation of the Son of God; the Apoſtles would often find it neceſſary, in reaſoning upon that ſcheme, and in argumentation in defence of it, to inſiſt on his humanity.

13. The third branch of the argument cannot be allowed to have any force at all, even though the aſſumption upon which it reſts ſhould be admitted, if we have the authority of the Apoſtles, in their writings, for the deity of Chriſt. The moſt that could be inferred, were the aſſumption true, would be ſomething ſtrange in their conduct; and even this might

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might be a haſty inference. The ſingularity of their conduct might diſappear, if the accounts which they have left of our Lord's life on earth, and of their attendance upon him, were more circumſtantial. But the truth is, that the foundations of this argument are unſound. It may be gathered from the evangelical hiſtory, imperfect as it is, that the behaviour of the Apoſtles to our Lord during his life, poſſeſſed as they were with an imperfect wavering belief in him as the Meſſiah, and with indiſtinct notions of the Meſſiah's divinity, was the natural behaviour of men under theſe impreſſions. They treat him upon all occaſions with a very diſtant reſerve: ſometimes they invoke him as a deity; as St. Peter when he was ſinking in the ſea, and all the diſciples in the ſtorm. If the angels Michael or Gabriel ſhould come and live among us in the manner which you ſuppoſe *, I think we ſhould ſoon loſe our habitual recollection of their angelic nature. It would be only occaſionally awaked by extraordinary incidents. This at leaſt would be the caſe, if they mixed with us upon an even footing, without aſſuming any badges of diſtinction, wearing a common garb, partaking of our lodging and of our board, ſuffering in the ſame degree with ourſelves from hunger and fatigue, and ſeeking the ſame refreſhments. The wonder would be if angels, in this diſguiſe, met with any other reſpect, than that which dignity of character commands, with ſomething of occaſional homage, when their miraculous help was needed. This was the reſpect which

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 94.

our

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our Lord met with from his followers. You say, "he could not divest himself of his superior and "proper nature*:" but St. Paul says quite the contrary; that he emptied himself, and assumed a form, which set out of sight the transcendent dignity of his nature, and deprived him of the homage due to it. The scheme of man's redemption required this humiliation, which made a part of the sufferings by which our guilt was to be atoned.

14. In the eighth section of this seventh letter, you argue against our Lord's divinity, from "the "manner in which he speaks of the power by which "he worked miracles, as not his own but the fa- "ther's†," and from the manner in which he speaks of himself, saying, *My Father is greater than I.* If from such expressions you would be content to infer, that the Almighty Father is indeed the fountain and the center of divinity, and that the equality of Godhead is to be understood with some mysterious subordination of the Son to the Father; you would have the concurrence of the antient fathers, and of many advocates of the true faith in all ages. If you would infer any other inferiority, than what is necessarily implied in the relation of a Son; some of the very passages, to which you allude, will serve to your confutation. Such are those sayings of our Lord, recorded in St. John's gospel, that "the Son "can do nothing of himself‡—the word which you

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 24. † Ibid. p. 95.
‡ St. John, v. 19.

hear

" hear is not mine but the father's which ſent me* "——the father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the " works†." Refer the expreſſions to the context, and it will appear that, with ſomething of a ſubordination on the part of the Son, they aſſert the moſt perfect identity of nature, the moſt entire unity of will, and conſent of intellect, and an inceſſant co-operation in the exertion of common powers to a common purpoſe. You are, Sir, very poſitive in the aſſertion, that Dr. Waterland in particular, and all the ſtrict Athanaſians of the laſt age, maintained, "that the Trinity conſiſts of three perſons, " all truly independent of each other‡." Upon this opinion, which you aſcribe to the ſtrict Athanaſians, you remark in your hiſtory §, that to make three proper diſtinct perſons, independent of each other, is to make three diſtinct Gods. I concur with you in this remark, in which you have been anticipated by the Roman Dionyſius; whoſe judgment you know, upon certain perſons of his own time, who, in their zeal againſt Sabellius, ran into this error, " is quoted with approbation by Athanaſius him- " ſelf‖." But, Sir, I deny of Dr. Waterland in particular, and of the ſtrict Athanaſians of the laſt age in general, that they fall juſtly under this cenſure.

* St. John, xiv. 24. † Ibid. xiv. 10.

‡ Letters to Dr. H. p. 80.

§ Vol. I. p. 147.

‖ See Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſt. vol. I. p. 65, and the firſt of theſe Letters.

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15 Bishop Bull, in his defence of the Nicene faith, ſpends a whole chapter, and a very long chapter it is, upon the ſubject of the Son's ſubordination; which he maintains to be as much a branch of the true faith, as the doctrine of the Son's eternity or conſubſtantiality.

16 The ſame thing is aſſerted by Biſhop Pearſon, in his expoſition of the Apoſtles creed. He obſerves, that "in the very name of Father there is "ſomething of eminence, which is not in that of "Son; and ſomething of Priority we muſt aſcribe "unto the firſt in reſpect of the ſecond perſon *." "——We muſt not therefore ſo far endeavour to "involve ourſelves in the darkneſs of this myſtery, "as to deny that glory which is clearly due unto "the Father—he is God, not of any other, but "of himſelf;——there is no other perſon who is "God, but is God of him. It is no diminution of "the Son to ſay, he is from another—but it were "a diminution of the Father to ſpeak ſo of him; "and there muſt be ſome pre-eminence, where there "is a place for derogation—The firſt perſon is a "Father indeed by reaſon of his Son, but he is "not God by reaſon of him; whereas the Son is "not only Son in regard of the Father, but alſo "God by reaſon of the ſame †." Upon this pre-eminence of the Father the learned biſhop founds the congruity of the divine miſſion ‡; and he main-"tains, that "the dignity of the Father appears

* Pearſon on the creed, p. 34. † Ibid.
‡ Ibid. p. 37.

"from

" from the order of perſons in the bleſſed Trinity, " of which he is undoubtedly the firſt. Although in " ſome paſſages of the apoſtolical diſcourſes, the Son " may be firſt named——and in others the Holy " Ghoſt precede the Son——yet where the three per- " ſons are barely enumerated, and delivered unto us " as the rule of faith, there that order is obſerved which " is proper to them——this order hath been perpe- " tuated in all confeſſions of faith, and is for ever " to be inviolably obſerved *." And this order being ſo generally acknowledged by the fathers, the biſhop remarks in a note, that " when we read in " the Athanaſian creed that *in this Trinity none is* " *afore or after other*, we muſt underſtand the ne- " gation of the priority of perfection or time †."

17. To the ſame purpoſe the learned Mr. William Stephens, author of ſome able diſcourſes on the Trinity, in his ſermon *On the eternal Generation of the Son of God*, preached before the Univerſity of Oxford, Auguſt 5th 1722; affirms, that "on the " communication of the Godhead from the Father " to the Son—is founded and eſtabliſhed all that ſub- " ordination which we aſſert among the Perſons of " the Trinity." He adds, that "unleſs ſome ſub- " ordination be maintained, we run into Tritheiſm." For he agrees with you and me, that " three *co-* " *ordinate* Perſons would be manifeſtly three Gods."

18. The ſame ſentiments are acknowledged by Dr. Waterland, in his commentary on the Athana-

* Pearſon on the creed, p. 37. † Ibid.

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" ſian creed. " When it is ſaid, *none is afore or after* " *other*, we are not to underſtand it of order: for " the Father is firſt, the Son ſecond, the Holy Ghoſt " third in order. Neither are we to underſtand it " of office; for the Father is ſupreme in office, while " the Son and Holy Ghoſt condeſcend to inferior " offices. But we are to underſtand it, as the creed " itſelf explains it, of duration and dignity *."

19. From theſe paſſages it appears, that you miſrepreſent the ſtrict Athanaſians of the laſt age, when you charge them with aſſerting ſuch a ſeparation and independence of the three Perſons, as would amount to Tritheiſm: and you miſrepreſent me, when you inſinuate, that I would ſet the three Perſons at a greater diſtance, than the Athanaſians of the laſt age allowed. I maintain that the three Perſons are one Being; One by mutual relation, indiſſoluble connection, and gradual ſubordination: ſo ſtrictly one, that any individual thing, in the whole world of matter and of ſpirit, preſents but a faint ſhadow of their unity. I maintain that each perſon by himſelf is God; becauſe each poſſeſſes fully every attribute of the divine nature. But I maintain that theſe Perſons are all included in the very idea of a God; and that for that reaſon, as well as for the identity of the attributes in each, it were impious and abſurd to ſay, there are three Gods. For to ſay there are three Gods were to ſay there are three Fathers, three Sons,

* Waterland on the Athanaſian creed p. 144.

and

and three Holy Ghoſts. I maintain the equality of the three Perſons in all the attributes of the divine nature. I maintain their equality in rank and authothority, with reſpect to all created things, whatever relations or differences may ſubſiſt between themſelves. Differences there muſt be, leſt we confound the Perſons; which was the error of Sabellius. But the differences can only conſiſt in the perſonal properties, leſt we divide the ſubſtance, and make a plurality of independent Gods. It will not put me out of conceit with the arguments, which I have brought to ſupport theſe ſacred truths, or with the illuſtrations which I have attempted, that you pronounce them equal in abſurdity to any thing in the Jewiſh cabala* (of which I ſuſpect you hardly know enough to judge with certainty of this pretended reſemblance) or that you imagine, when you read me, that you are reading Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus †. Perhaps, Sir, though a proteſtant divine, I may ſometimes condeſcend to look into the *Summa* ‡, and may be leſs mortified, than you conceive, with this compariſon. It was well meant however, and is one of thoſe general depreciatory inſinuations, which are apt to catch the vulgar, and may ſerve the purpoſe of a reply upon any occaſion, when a real reply is not to be framed.

I am, &c.

* Letters to Dr. H. p. 80. † Ibid. p. 99.

‡ — no Proteſtant, I imagine, will ever think it worth his while to read many ſections in that work—the Summa. Hiſtory of Corruptions, vol. I. p. 119.

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

The Unitarian doctrine not well calculated for the converſion of Jews, Mahometans, or Infidels, of any deſcription.

DEAR SIR,

LETTER XVI.

YOU expreſs in your hiſtory, and in your letters to me, a very charitable anxiety about Jews, Mahometans, and Infidels. It is one of your great objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it is, as you conceive, an obſtruction to their converſion; which you think might be ſpeedily effected, by reducing Chriſtianity to the Unitarian creed. My notion is, that it is our duty to adhere to the letter of the goſpel; and to leave it to God to open the eyes of Jews, Mahometans, and Infidels, in his own time and in his own way. Your device of bringing them to believe Chriſtianity, by giving the name of Chriſtianity to what they already believe, in principle exactly reſembles the ſtratagem of a certain miſſionary of the Jeſuits, of whom I have ſomewhere redde; who, in his zeal for the converſion of an Indian chief, on whom the ſublimity of the doctrine of the goſpel and the purity of its moral precepts made little impreſſion, told him that Chriſt had been a valiant and ſucceſsful warrior, who in the ſpace of three years ſcalped men, women, and children without number. The ſavage was well-diſpoſed to become a diſciple of ſuch a maſter—He was baptized with his whole tribe, and the Jeſuit gloried in his numerous converts.

2. Pardon

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2. PARDON me, Sir, if I expreſs a doubt, whether your ſtratagem promiſe equal ſucceſs. For the Jews; whenever they begin to open their eyes to the evidences of our Saviour's miſſion, they will ſtill be apt to conſider the New Teſtament in connection with the Old. They will look for an agreement, in principle at leaſt, between the Goſpel and the Law. When they accept the Chriſtian doctrine, it will be as a later and a fuller diſcovery. They will reject it, if they conceive it to be contradictory to the patriarchal and the Moſaic revelations. Succeſſive diſcoveries of divine truth may differ, they will ſay, in fullneſs and perſpicuity; but in principle they muſt harmonize, as parts of one ſyſtem. They will retain ſome veneration for their traditional doctrines; and in their moſt antient Targums, as well as in alluſions in their ſacred books, they will find the notion of one Godhead in a Trinity of perſons; and they will perceive, that it was in contradiction to the Chriſtians, that their later rabbin abandoned the notions of their forefathers. The Unitarian ſcheme of Chriſtianity is the laſt therefore to which the Jews are likely to be converted, as it is the moſt at enmity with their antient faith.

3. WITH the Mahometans indeed, your proſpects may ſeem more promiſing; as the whole difference between you and them ſeems very inconſiderable. The true Muſſulman believes as much, or rather more of Chriſt, than the Unitarian requires to be believed; and though the Unitarians have not yet recogniſed the divine miſſion of Mahomet, there is good ground

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to think, they will not long ſtand out*. In Unitarian writings of the laſt century, it is allowed of Mahomet, that he had no other deſign than to reſtore the belief of the unity of God—of his religion, that it was not meant for a new religion, but for a reſtitution of the true intent of the Chriſtian—of the grand prevalence of the Mahometan religion, that it hath been owing, not to force and the ſword, but to that one truth contained in the Alcoran, the unity of God. With theſe friendly diſpoſitions towards each other, it ſhould ſeem that the Mahometan and the Unitarian might eaſily be brought to agree. But the experiment hath been very ſeriouſly tried, without any event anſwerable to the expectation. You may not know it, Sir, but ſo it was, that in the reign of Charles the ſecond, a negociation was regularly opened, on the part of our Engliſh Unitarians, with his excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, ambaſſador of the emperor of Morocco at the Britiſh court, in order to form an alliance with the Mahometan prince for the more effectual propagation of the

* Dr. Prieſtley, in his Second Letters, p. 163, wittily remarks, "that I might almoſt as well aſſert that all the "Unitarians in England are already ſo far Mahometans, "that, to my certain knowledge, they are actually circum-"ciſed." Upon this occaſion I cannot but remind him of what hiſtory records of an elder brother of our modern Unitarians. In the latter end of the ſixteenth century, Adam Neuſer, paſtor of the church of Heidelberg, the firſt, or among the firſt propagators of the Socinian hereſy in the Palatinate, began in Socinianiſm, and finiſhed his career with turning Mahometan, and ſubmitting to circumciſion at Conſtantinople.

Unitarian

Unitarian principles. The two Unitarian divines, who undertook this ſingular treaty, addreſs the ambaſſador and the Muſſulmen of his ſuite, as "vo-" taries and fellow-worſhippers of the ſole ſupreme " deity." They return thanks to God, that he hath preſerved the emperor of Morocco, and his ſubjects, in the excellent knowledge of one only ſovereign God, who hath no diſtinction nor plurality of perſons; and in many other wholeſome doctrines. They ſay, that they, with their pens, defend the faith of one ſupreme God, and that God raiſed up Mahomet to do the ſame with the ſword, as a ſcourge on idolizing Chriſtians. They therefore ſtile themſelves the fellow-champions with the Mahometans for theſe truths. They offer their aſſiſtance, to purge the Alcoran of certain corruptions and interpolations; which, after the death of Mahomet, had crept into his papers of which the Alcoran was compoſed. For of Mahomet they think too highly, to ſuppoſe that he could be guilty of the many repugnancies, which are to be found in the writings that go under his name. This work they declare themſelves willing to undertake for the vindication of Mahomet's glory. They intimate, that the corrections, which they would propoſe, would render the Alcoran more conſiſtent, not with itſelf only, but with the goſpel of Chriſt; of which they ſay Mahomet pretended to be but a preacher. They tell the ambaſſador, that the Unitarian Chriſtians are a great and conſiderable people. To give weight to the aſſertion, they enumerate the hereſiarchs of all ages who

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who have oppoſed the Trinity, from Paulus Samoſatenſis down to Fauſtus Socinus and the leaders of the Polonian fraternity: they celebrate the modern tribes of Arianiſing Chriſtians, as aſſertors of the proper unity of God: and they cloſe the honourable liſt with the Mahometans themſelves. "All "theſe, they ſay, maintain the faith of one—God. "And why ſhould we forget to add you Mahome-"tans, who alſo conſent with us in the belief of one "only ſupreme deity." Such is the ſubſtance of a letter, which they preſented to the ambaſſador, with ſome latin manuſcripts reſpecting the differences between Chriſtianity and the Mahometan religion, and containing an ample detail of the Unitarian tenets. They apply to the Muſſulman as to a perſon of "known diſcernment in ſpiritual and ſublime matters;" and they intreat him to communicate the import of their manuſcripts to the conſideration of the fitteſt perſons of his countrymen. This ſingular epiſtle may be ſeen entire in Dr. Leſlie's *Socinian controverſy diſcuſſed*. An hundred years are almoſt elapſed, ſince theſe overtures were made to the Moor; and as no effect hath yet followed, it ſhould ſeem, that the converſion of the Mahometans to the Unitarian Chriſtianity is as unlikely as that of the Jews.

4. For the unbelievers, Sir, Mr. Gibbon, as you ſeem yourſelf to intimate, hath given you but ſlender hopes *. Unbelievers indeed are of two deſcriptions.

* "——— Mr. Gibbon has abſolutely declined to diſcuſs with me, as I propoſed to him, the hiſtorical evidences of Chriſtianity." Preface to Reply to Monthly Review for June, p. 8.

The

The ſober Deiſts; who, rejecting revelation, acknowledge however the obligations of morality; believe a Providence; and expect a future retribution: and the Atheiſts; who have neither hope nor fear beyond the preſent life; deny the Providence of God; and doubt at leaſt of his exiſtence.

5. INFIDELS of the firſt deſcription will hardly become your diſciples, becauſe you have nothing to teach them, but what they think they know. "We think, they will ſay, no leſs reverently than you of the moral attributes of God. Upon our notions of his attributes we build an expectation of a future exiſtence; and we look for a lot of happineſs or miſery, in our future life, according to our deſerts in this. The whole difference between you and us is this; that we believe the ſame things upon different evidence: you, upon the teſtimony of a man; who you ſay was raiſed up to preach theſe truths: we, upon the evidence of reaſon; which we think a higher evidence than any human teſtimony. We think that a revelation is pretended with a very ill grace, when nothing hath been actually revealed. Revelation is diſcovery. The doctrines of a God, a Providence, and a future ſtate were known to the Jews before Chriſt; to the Patriarchs before Moſes; they have been known to thinking men in all ages: and there can be no place for diſcovery, where there hath been no concealment." If you would ſay, that the end of revelation is, to extend to all mankind that uſeful knowledge, which muſt otherwiſe have been enjoyed but by a few; to convey information by teſtimony to thoſe who are incapable

of

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of informing themſelves by abſtract reaſoning; that the goſpel is therefore a revelation, becauſe to the bulk of mankind it is a diſcovery, and a diſcovery of ſufficient importance to claim a divine original: they will reply, that whatever weight this argument might carry, if it were urged by thoſe who take the ſcriptures in their literal meaning, and conceive that the revelation is conveyed in a plain undiſguiſed language; it is a feeble weapon in the hand of an Unitarian. "If your method of interpretation be the true one, the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity, they will ſay, differed not from other moraliſts, otherwiſe than by the wonderful obſcurity of their language, and the air of myſtery which they have contrived to throw over the ſimpleſt truths. Their enigmatic language is as little adapted to popular apprehenſion, as the abſtruſe reaſonings of philoſophers. The ſucceſs of their doctrine hath been ſuch as might have been well foreſeen. They were ſtudious of obſcurity—they have attained their end. They have been miſunderſtood by a great majority of their followers for almoſt two thouſand years. They profeſſed to teach the pure worſhip of the true God. The language, in which they conveyed their doctrine, hath been the means of introducing the groſſeſt idolatry. We will not truſt ourſelves to ſuch dangerous guides, who, as you expound their writings, never ſpake upon the moſt intereſting ſubjects without figure and equivocation."*

6. For the Atheiſtic infidels, who are in the firſt place to be convinced of the exiſtence of a deity; your doctrine, that there is no mind in man, but what reſults

ſults from the organization of the brain, will never lead them to conclude, that mind is older than body in the univerſe. " You would perſuade me, the Atheiſt will ſay, that there is an higher intellect than mine, the cauſe of all things. But if intellect in me be the reſult of motion, why not in any other intelligent? You only confirm my incredulity, and multiply my doubts. You make me doubt of my own intellect, while you would account for its production; and you confirm the ſuſpicion, which I have long entertained, that the material world is older than its ſuppoſed maker: that mind, if indeed ſuch a thing exiſt, hath like all other things ſtarted ſpontaneouſly from a corporeal chaos; and, inſtead of being the firſt cauſe and the governing principle, is the youngeſt of all nature's productions." Your principle that death is an utter extinction of the man, your Atheiſtical pupil will eaſily admit. But it is little likely to awaken him to the hope of a future exiſtence. The hope which you hold out of a reſurrection, he will tell you, is no hope at all, even admitting that the evidence of the thing could, upon your principles, be indiſputable. " The Atoms which compoſe *Me*, your Atheiſt will ſay, may indeed have compoſed a man before, and may again. But *Me* they will never more compoſe, when once the preſent *Me* is diſſipated. I have no recollection of a former, and no concern about a future ſelf.

Et nunc nihil ad nos de nobis attinet, anté
Qui fuimus; nec jam de illis nos afficit angor,
Quos de materiâ noſtrâ nova proferet ætas.

Inter

Inter enim jecta eſt vitäi pauſa, vageque
Deerârunt paſſim motus ab ſenſibus omnes."

7. It ſhould ſeem, Sir, that your doctrines are ill calculated for the converſion of Jews or Infidels. Upon the Mahometans their efficacy hath been tried without ſucceſs. The Unitarians therefore are not likely to be the inſtruments of theſe converſions.

I am, &c.

N. B. The ſtory of the negociation on the part of the Engliſh Unitarians, in the reign of Charles the Second, with the ambaſſador of the Emperor of Morocco, Dr. Prieſtley, in the Fifteenth of his Second Letters, is pleaſed to treat with great contempt, as an invention, that is to ſay, a lie or forgery, of Dr. Leſlie's. Fortunately the evidence of this extraordinary fact is yet extant in the Archiepiſcopal Library at Lambeth. Among the *Codices MSS. Teniſoniani*, is a thin folio, marked with the number 673, and entered in the Catalogue, under the article *Socinians*, by the title of *Syſtema Theologiæ Socinianæ*. It contains four tracts. The firſt is the very letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, publiſhed by Dr. Leſlie, written in a very fair hand. On the preceding

çeding leaf are theſe remarks. " Theſe are the ori-
" ginal papers, which a cabal of Socinians in Lon-
" don offered to preſent to the Embaſſadour of the
" King of Fez and Morocco, when he was taking
" leave of England. Auguſt 1682. The ſaid
" Embaſſadour refuſed to receive them, after having
" underſtood that they concerned religion. The
" agent of the Socinians was Monſieur Verzè. Sir
" Charles Cottrell, Kn. Mr. of the Cerem. then
" præſent, deſired he might have them; which was
" graunted: and he brought them and gave them
" to me Thomas Teniſon, then Vicar of St. Mar-
" tins in the Fields, Middl."

The ſecond tract is in Latin, entituled, *Epiſtola Ameth Benundula Mahometani ad Auriacum Principem Comitum Mauritium, et ad Emmanuelem Portugalliæ Principem.*

The thtrd tract is again in Latin, entituled, *Animadverſiones in præcedentem Epiſtolam.* Theſe two tracts are the Latin letter, and the remarks of the Unitarian Divines upon it, which are mentioned in the Engliſh letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, and of which Dr. Leſlie, in his preface, ſays he had ſeen a printed copy.

The fourth tract I take to be the preface to the printed edition, or intended edition. This alſo is in Latin, and is inſcribed *Theognis Irenæus Chriſtiano Lectori ſalutem.*

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I DO moſt ſolemnly averr, that I have this day (Jan. 15, 1789) compared the letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, as publiſhed by Dr. Leſlie in his *Socinian Controverſy diſcuſſed*, with the MS. in the Archbiſhop's Library, and find that the printed copy, with the exception of ſome trivial typographical errors, which in no way affect the ſenſe, and are ſuch as any reader will diſcover and correct for himſelf, is exactly conformable to the MS. without the omiſſion or addition of a ſingle word. I do moreover averr, that the remarks in the leaf at the beginning of the MS. giving an account of its contents, and of the manner in which theſe papers came into the poſſeſſion of Dr. Teniſon, were this ſame day copied verbatim from the MS. by myſelf upon the ſpot.

IF Dr. Prieſtley ſhould miſtruſt my veracity in theſe aſſertions (which I think he will not) I promiſe him that I will at any time uſe my endeavours to procure him a ſight of the MS. that he may ſatisfy himſelf.

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LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

The Archdeacon takes leave of the controverſy.

DEAR SIR,

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IT might be but conſiſtent with the *pride*, which you impute to me as a churchman; and with the *contemptuous airs*, which I am apt to give myſelf with reſpect to diſſenters*; were I to cloſe our preſent correſpondence without any notice of your animadverſions upon that part of my Charge, which regards the ſtudies of the younger clergy, and what you are pleaſed to call my terms of communion. It might be a ſufficient, and not an unbecoming reply, to remind you that I ſpoke *ex cathedrâ*, and hold myſelf accountable for the advice which I gave to no human judicature, except the KING, the Metropolitan, and my Dioceſan. This would indeed be the only anſwer, which I ſhould condeſcend to give to any one for whom I retained not, under all our differences, a very conſiderable degree of perſonal eſteem. But as Dr.

* "If your pride as a churchman, and the contemptuous "airs you give yourſelf with reſpect to Diſſenters, &c." Letters to Dr. H. p. 112.

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Prieſtley is my adverſary, in ſome points I could wiſh to ſet him right, and in ſome I deſire to explain.

2. If I have any where expreſſed myſelf contemptuouſly, the contempt is not of you, but of your argument upon a particular ſubject, upon which I truly think you argue very weakly; and of your information upon a point, in which I truly think you are ill informed. This hinders not, but that I may entertain the reſpect, which I profeſs, for your learning in other ſubjects; for your abilities in all ſubjects in which you are learned; and a cordial eſteem and affection for the virtues of your character, which I believe to be great and amiable. Your attack being made upon thoſe parts of the eſtabliſhed faith, which I conceive to be fundamental principles of the Chriſtian religion, I hold it my duty to ſhew the weakneſs of your reaſoning; to expoſe your inſufficiency in theſe ſubjects; and to bear my teſtimony aloud againſt your doctrine. Between duty to God and to his church, and reſpect for man, it were criminal to heſitate. Upon any occaſion, wherein complaiſance might be allowed to operate, you are the laſt perſon, whoſe feelings I would have wounded.

3. You ſeem to think that I ſecretly ſuſpect you of artifices, which are incompatible with that purity of intention, which I would ſeem willing to allow*. In your laſt pamphlet, you complain that I have charged you with ſeveral inſtances of groſs

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 12.

diſin-

diſingenuity *. I am ſenſible, that, in theſe letters, you will find more and ſtronger inſtances of charges, which you will be apt to interpret as unfavourably; and this, I fear, will heighten the ſuſpicion which you expreſs; that even the compliments I ſometimes pay you are ironically meant †.

4. INDEED, Sir, in quoting antient authors, when you have underſtood the original, which in many inſtances is not the caſe, you have too often been guilty of much reſerve and management. This appears in ſome inſtances, in which you cannot pretend, that your own inadvertency, or your printer's, hath given occaſion to unmerited imputations. I wiſh that my complaints upon this head had been groundleſs: but in juſtice to my own cauſe, I could not ſuffer unfair quotations to paſs undetected. I am unwilling to draw any concluſion from this unſeemly practice, againſt the general probity of your character. But you muſt allow me to lament, that men of integrity, in the ſervice of what they think a good end, ſhould indulge themſelves ſo freely as they often do, in the uſe of unjuſtifiable means. Time was when the practice was openly avowed; and Origen himſelf was among its defenders. The art which he recommended, he ſcrupled not to employ. I have produced an inſtance, in which to ſilence an adverſary, he had recourſe to the willful and deliberate allegation of a notorious falſehood.

* Remarks on the Monthly Review, p. 12, note.

† Letters to Dr. H. p. 110.

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You have gone no ſuch length as this. I think you may believe me ſincere, when I ſpeak reſpectfully of your worth and integrity, notwithſtanding that I find occaſion to charge you with ſome degree of blame, in a ſort in which the great character of Origen was more deeply infected. Would God it had been otherwiſe. Would God I could with truth have boaſted, " To theſe low arts ſtooped Origen; " but my contemporary, my great antagoniſt, diſ- " dains them." How would it have heightened the pride of victory, could I have found a fair occaſion to be thus the herald of my adverſary's praiſe.

5. I AM not ſenſible, that I have ſpoken contemptuouſly of Diſſenters in general. A fair and conſciencious diſſent is not the object of contempt; neither is a petulant hoſtility againſt eſtabliſhments reſpectable. The praiſe which I give the Church of England, that ſhe is the firſt in conſideration of all the Proteſtant Churches, is no more than liberal Diſſenters have themſelves allowed. I have heard, from very good authority, of a converſation that paſſed between the late Dr. Chandler and a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, in which Chandler was a warm advocate for the conſtitution of the Church of England, in preference to any of the reformed Churches. You will remember, that I make the learning and the piety of her clergy, of which ample monuments are extant, the baſis of her pre-eminence; to which however another circumſtance

cumſtance hath in ſome degree contributed; namely, that ſhe had the diſcretion to obſerve ſome decency and moderation, in the buſineſs of reforming. I cannot admit, that meer diſtance from the Church of Rome is the true ſtandard of purity; and when you recollect, how ſtrongly that maxim favours of Jack's ſpleen againſt Lord Peter; I am apt to think you will regret, that ſuch a ſentiment ſhould ſtain your page *.

6. It is ſtill my opinion, that any young clergyman who will diligently apply to the courſe of ſtudies, which I took the liberty to recommend, may do without Dr. Whitby's *Diſquiſitions*, or Dr. Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine* †. The laſt treatiſe contains indeed a very full collection of the texts relating to the Trinity. The compilation from the fathers is incompleat; the learned author having carefully ſelected thoſe paſſages which, taken by themſelves in detachment from their contexts, ſeem favourable to his own opinions. I will not however deny, that to ſtudents of a certain deſcription, the book may have its uſe. I myſelf perhaps owe ſomething to it: which, as you recommend it to my particular attention, it ſeems incumbent upon me to declare. I believe, Sir, that few have thought ſo much upon theſe ſubjects, as you and I have done, who have not at firſt wavered. Perhaps nothing but the uneaſineſs of doubt, added to a juſt ſenſe of the importance of the queſtion, could engage any

* See Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 112. † Ibid. p. 3.

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man in the toil of the enquiry. For my own part I ſhall not heſitate to confeſs, that I ſet out with great ſcruples. But the progreſs of my mind hath been the very reverſe of yours. It was at firſt my principle, as it is ſtill yours, that all appearance of difficulty in the doctrine of the goſpel muſt ariſe from miſinterpretation; and I was fond of the expedient of getting rid of myſtery, by ſuppoſing a figure in the language. The harſhneſs of the figures, which I had ſometimes occaſion to ſuppoſe, and the obvious uncertainty of all figurative interpretations, ſoon gave me a diſtruſt of this method of expounding: and Butler's Analogy cured me of the folly of looking for nothing myſterious in the true ſenſe of a divine revelation. By this cure I was prepared to become an eaſy convert to the doctrine of atonement and ſatisfaction; which ſeemed to furniſh incentives to piety, that no other doctrine could ſupply. I ſoon perceived, how the value of the atonement was heightened, and what a ſublimity accrued to the whole doctrine of Redemption, by the notion, clearly conveyed in the Scriptures literally taken, of a Redeemer deſcending from a previous ſtate of glory, to become our teacher and to make the expiation. Thus I was brought to a full perſuaſion of our Lord's pre-exiſtent dignity. Having once admitted his pre-exiſtence in an exalted ſtate, I ſaw the neceſſity of placing him at the head of the creation. "For a derived pre-exiſtent Being, ſup-
"poſed to animate the body of Jeſus, who is not
"alſo the maker of the world, is, as you well ob-
"ſerve

" ſerve, a meer creature of the imagination; whoſe " exiſtence is not to be inferred, with the leaſt co- " lourable pretext from the Scripture *:" ſince it is not to be found either in the literal, or in the figurative meaning. Not in the literal confeſſedly. Not in the figurative; becauſe if the texts, which ſpeak of Chriſt as the maker of the world, admit a figurative conſtruction; " much more thoſe which " refer only to his pre-exiſtence †." I thank you, Sir, for expreſſing my own ſentiments with ſo much perſpicuity, and for proving them with ſo much evidence. Being thus convinced, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is indeed the maker of all things; I found, that I could not reſt ſatisfied with the notion of a maker of the univerſe *not God*. I ſaw that all the extravagancies of the Gnoſtics hung upon that one principle: and I could have little opinion of the truth of a principle, which ſeemed ſo big with miſchief. I then ſet myſelf to conſider, whether I knew enough of the divine unity, to pronounce the " Trinity an infringement of it." Upon this point the Platoniſts, whoſe acquaintance I now began to cultivate, ſoon brought me to a right mind. It was in this ſtage of my enquiries, while I was wavering between the Arian tenets in their original extent, and the true faith, that I firſt opened Dr. Clarke's *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*. I ſat ſeriouſly down to the peruſal of the book—I roſe a firm and decided Trinitarian. And why not re-

* Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 84.

† Hiſtory of Corruption, vol. I. p. 146.

commend

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commend to others, you will ſay, a book which had ſo principal a ſhare in your own converſion? I will tell you. It is one of thoſe books, which may either inſtruct or miſlead, according to the previous attainments and habits of the ſtudent. I was much at home in the Greek language; I had redde the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, and I had been many years in the habit of thinking for myſelf, upon a variety of ſubjects, before I opened Dr. Clarke's book. There is in moſt men a culpable timidity; you and I perhaps have overcome that general infirmity; but there is in moſt men a culpable timidity, which inclines them to be eaſily overawed by the authority of great names: and, much as we talk of the freedom and liberality of thinking and enquiry, it is this ſlaviſh principle, not, as is pretended, any freedom of original thought, which makes converts to Infidelity and Hereſy. Fools imagine, that the greateſt authorities are always on the ſide of new and ſingular opinions; and that, by adopting them, they get themſelves into better company, than they have naturally any right to keep: and thus they are ſecretly worſhippers of authority, in that very act in which they pretend to fly in the face of it. They worſhip private authority, while they fly in the face of univerſal. They deride an old and general tradition, becauſe they have not ſagacity to trace the connection of its parts, and to perceive the force of the entire evidence: and while they thus trample on the accumulated authority of ages, with an idiot ſimplicity they ſuffer themſelves to be ledde by the meer

meer name of the writer of the day, a Bolingbroke, a Voltaire, a Gibbon, or a Prieſtley; as if they thought to become wiſe and learned by taking a ſhare and an intereſt in the follies, or the party-views, of men of abilities and learning. And where a ſecret conſciouſneſs of ignorance is not accompanied with the vain ambition of being thought wiſe; ſtill an undue deference to private authority, in prejudice of eſtabliſhed opinion, ſeems to be the ſide upon which even modeſt men are liable to err. Inſomuch, that every man may be ſuppoſed to partake of this infirmity, in ſubjects in which he feels himſelf unlearned. To thoſe, therefore, who are qualified to uſe Dr. Clarke's book as a digeſt, which, though incompleat, may aſſiſt them in forming a judgment for themſelves; to thoſe who can and will turn it to this uſe, it may be ſerviceable. But they, who from a modeſt ſenſe of their own inſufficiency in the learned languages, and in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, may be diſpoſed to liſten to the opinion of the writer, will be more miſledde by his authority than they will be informed by the compilation. In a word, it is a book of which a ſcholar may make his uſe; but I cannot recommend it to young Divines, in the beginning of their ſtudies.

7. In the concluſion of your ſeventh letter, you ſpeak of a certain defence of Biſhop Bull's of the damnatory clauſe in the Athanaſian creed; of which, inaſmuch as I have recommended the writings of Biſhop Bull without exception, you "preſume, you tell

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"tell me, that I approve." And to correct these expressions, which state as a presumption only, or an inference, what might be directly proved upon me by my own words, you add in a parenthesis, that I have mentioned this among the most valuable works of that learned prelate *. Of whatever importance, Sir, I may conceive it to be, that the faith which was first delivered to the saints should be preserved whole and undefiled; whatever I may think of the folly and the crime of setting up private judgement for the rule of public opinion, in opposition to a tradition traced to the first ages, and by consequence of the same authority with that on which the credit of the Canon rests; I am no lover of damnatory clauses. I am an enemy to any application of damnatory clauses to particular persons. I am hopeful, that there is more folly in the world than malignity; more ignorance than positive infidelity; more error than heretical perverseness. How is it then, that I recommend a defence of the damnatory clause, among the most valuable of a learned Bishop's works? Sir, did you write this in your sleep? Or is it in a dream only that I seem to read it? Bishop Bull's defence of the damnatory clause! From you, Sir, I have now my first information that Bishop Bull ever wrote upon the subject. The writings of Bishop Bull, which I have particularly recommended, are these three Latin treatises; *Defensio fidei Nicenæ*; *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ de necessitate credendi Jesum Christum esse verum Deum*;

* Letters to Dr. Horsley, p. 100.

Primitiva

Primitiva et Apoſtolica traditio de Jeſu Chriſti divinitate. To which I might have added a fourth, of leſs importance, *Animadverſiones in brevem tractatum Gul. Clerke*, &c. Theſe are all his writings upon the Trinitarian Controverſy, which are contained in the edition of his Latin works by Grabe. In theſe treatiſes there is no defence of the damnatory clauſe; nor, that I recollect, any mention of the Athanaſian creed. There is no defence of the damnatory clauſe in the ſermons and Engliſh tracts publiſhed by Mr. Nelſon. Nor can I find any ſuch tract mentioned by Mr. Nelſon among the Biſhop's loſt works; for many ſmall pieces, which it was known that he had written, were never found after his death. Where have I mentioned, Sir, with ſuch high approbation, a work which I declare I have never ſeen; and of which, you will forgive me, if I ſtill doubt the exiſtence*?

8. Had

* Dr. Prieſtley is reduced to the neceſſity of confeſſing, in the ſixteenth of his Second Letters, that he knows no more than I, in what library any work of Biſhop Bull's upon the damnatory clauſe in the Athanaſian creed is to be found. And yet he affects to be indignant that I ſhould preſume to reſent a falſe accuſation; a calumny, founded on my pretended admiration of a work that never exiſted. It ſeems, when he ſpoke of this defence, he had in his mind the *Judicium Eccleſiæ Catholicæ*, but, "not looking into the title-page of the book," he deſcribed it by a wrong name. But unfortunately his deſcription is not more erroneous in the name, than in the ſubject. The occaſion and manner of his error may eaſily be divined. Having no acquaintance with Biſhop Bull's writings, but what his controverſy with me hath

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8. HAD I been aware of the offence which I find the word *conventicle* hath given, I would have avoided the uſe of it. We are engaged in a ſubject, in which I hold it my duty to diſplay my argument in its utmoſt force;

hath occaſioned; when he wrote his Firſt Letters, he made a gueſs about the particular ſubject of each work, from the titles enumerated by me. Among theſe he found the "*Judicium Eccleſiæ Catholicæ*," &c. He gueſſed that this judgement of the Catholic Church, which Biſhop Bull defended, was a judgment founded on the damnatory clauſe in the Athanaſian creed. So he gueſſed, that Biſhop Bull, defending that judgement, muſt have defended the damnatory clauſe; and he choſe to gueſs further, that I, the profeſſed admirer of Biſhop Bull, of all parts of his writings the moſt admired that defence.

Dr. Prieſtley hath ſince indeed looked further into this matter. And at the time when he drew up his Second Letters, he had diſcovered that the judgement of the church, defended by Biſhop Bull, is the anathema of the Nicene Council againſt thoſe, who ſhould in any way impugn the article of our Lord's divinity. This Biſhop Bull indeed defends: that is, he maintains the hiſtorical fact, that the Fathers of the Nicene Council inforced the belief of that article under the ſolemn ſanction of a public ſentence; which fact Epiſcopius had denied.

Dr. Prieſtley, being now informed of the real ſubject of Biſhop Bull's treatiſe, ſays, "that the damnatory clauſe in the Athanaſian creed, and the anathema annexed to the Nicene, are things exactly of the ſame nature." Were I to undertake the defence of the damnatory clauſe in the Athanaſian creed, it ſhould indeed be upon this principle, that it is a thing ſomewhat of the ſame nature with the anathema annexed to the Nicene. The anathema is no part of the Nicene creed: it is only a ſentence of the church, againſt the impugners

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force; and even to uſe pretty freely that high ſeaſoning of controverſy, which may intereſt the reader's attention; but I would not willfully give offence by harſh words, from which the reaſoning may acquire neither force nor luſtre. You ſay, that the word conventicle uſually ſignifies, an unlawful aſſembly. For my own part I thought it barely equivalent to the old Greek word συνηλυσις, which was the name for certain irregular aſſemblies, not as illegal; for the word was

pugners of a particular article. What is called the damnatory clauſe is no part of the Athanaſian. It is a clauſe, not of the creed, but of a prefatory ſentence, in which the author declares his opinion of the importance of the rule of faith he is about to deliver. But in whatever degree the damnatory clauſe may be capable or incapable of apology, Dr. Prieſtley is, I believe, the only writer, who ever confounded two things ſo totally diſtinct as an anathema, and an article of faith; which he conceives the damnatory clauſe to be. An anathema is ſimply a ſentence of excommunication. The church of England anathematizes thoſe, who ſpeak diſreſpectfully of her Book of Common Prayer. (See the IVth Canon). But that every perſon, who ſhall incur the anathema of the IVth Canon, ſhall periſh everlaſtingly, is no clauſe of the church of England's creed.

Dr. Prieſtley hath lengthened his ſixteenth letter, with a recital of ſeveral paſſages from Biſhop Bull's works, which he thinks muſt compel me to acknowledge, that, whatever I may be, Biſhop Bull at leaſt was a friend to damnatory clauſes. The ſentiments expreſſed by Biſhop Bull, in the paſſages produced by Dr. Prieſtley, I would be underſtood to cheriſh and embrace with the moſt entire unqualified approbation. If to cheriſh ſuch ſentiments, and to be a friend to damnatory clauſes, be the ſame thing, I ſtand convicted. *Habet confitentem reum.*

brought

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brought into uſe in an age when all aſſemblies of Chriſtians were, in the civil ſenſe, equally illegal; but it was the name for aſſemblies, meeting for the purpoſe of religious worſhip, without authority from the Biſhop. Such aſſemblies, in the primitive ages, were thought to be ſpiritually unauthorized; and in this ſenſe the word conventicle is applicable at this day to many religious meetings, which are not liable to any legal penalties. I could have wiſhed, that the uſe of it had been conſidered as one of the meer archaiſms of my ſtile; in which nothing of inſult was intended. I muſt however declare, that it would give me particular pleaſure to receive conviction, that Mr. Lindſey's meeting-houſe and your own are not more emphatically conventicles; in your own ſenſe, that is, in the worſt ſenſe of the word. From perſonal reſpect from you and him, I ſhould be happy to be aſſured, that you ſtand not within the danger of the 35th of Eliz. c. 1. or the 17th C. 2. c. 2. To the penalties of which, and of other ſtatutes, I muſt take the liberty to tell you, you are obnoxious, notwithſtanding the late act of the 19th of his preſent majeſty in favour of diſſenters, unleſs at the quarter ſeſſions of the peace for the county where you live, you have made a certain declaration *, which is required by that act, inſtead of the ſubſcription to articles required by the former acts of Toleration. I am ſorry, Sir, to inform you, that I find no entry of Mr. Linſey's declaration in the office of the clerk of the peace, either for the county of Middleſex, or the city of Weſtminſter. Could I make the ſame

* Appendix, N° VI.

enquiry

enquiry concerning you (which the diſtance of your reſidence prevents) I fear I ſhould have the mortification to find, that you have no more than your friend complied with the laws, from which you claim protection. A report prevails, that you both object to the declaration, from conſcientious ſcruples. A very ſufficient excuſe for not making it; but no excuſe at all for doing what the law allows not to be done, except upon the expreſs condition, that the declaration be previouſly made. Had you made the declaration, you might indeed be intitled to the ſame indulgence by virtue of the late act, to which you would have been intitled by a ſubſcription to certain articles under former acts of Toleration; but not without the performance of certain other conditions, required by the 1ſt of William and Mary, c. 18. from which other conditions diſſenters are not releaſed by any ſubſequent ſtatutes. For the ſingle operation of the 19th of our preſent gracious ſovereign, c. 44. is to ſubſtitute a ſhort and general declaration, inſtead of a more particular ſubſcription. All other limitations of the indulgences granted by the firſt of William and Mary ſtand as they were. Had you therefore made the declaration, which the law demands; ſtill to intitle your meetings to the benefit of the Toleration, it would have been neceſſary that the places of them ſhould be certified (according to the laſt clauſe of 1ſt of William and Mary, c. 18.) either to the Biſhop of the Dioceſe, or to the Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry, or to the Juſtices of the Peace at the General or Quarter Seſſions of the Peace for the County, City, or

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Place where ſuch meeting may be held *.——I have ſearched the Regiſters of the Epiſcopal court of London, of the Archdeacon's court of Middleſex, and the records of the ſeſſions for the County of Middleſex, and for the City of Weſtminſter, for an entry of the houſe in Eſſex-ſtreet, without ſucceſs †. About your meeting-houſe I am precluded, as before, from making a regular enquiry. But I fear you have not taken the proper meaſures for your legal ſecurity; becauſe the profeſſed ground of your diſſent from the church of England is not a meer diſagreement about particular articles, but a general denial of the magiſtrate's authority, either to prohibit or to tolerate ‡. Still, Sir, were you ready to comply with the requiſitions of the law in theſe two particulars, the declaration of your own belief in the holy ſcriptures, and the notification of the place of meeting to the eccleſiaſtical or the ſecular magiſtrate, Mr. Lindſey and you, by the doctrines which you publicly maintain ‖, are excluded from all benefits of the acts of Toleration. Your meeting-houſe and his, contrary to your imagination, are Illegal; UNKNOWN to the laws, and UNPROTECTED by them. If this be the definition of a Conventicle, they are CONVENTICLES by the expreſs

* Appendix, No. V.

† But ſee xvii. of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters and my Remarks upon the Second Letters, Part 2. cap. iv. § 6.

‡ "Excluſive of every thing contained in the religion of "the church of England, it is chiefly the authority by which "it is enjoyned that diſſenters object to in it." Hiſt. of Corruptions, vol. II. p. 357.

‖ Appendix, No. IV.

letter

letter of the law, and in your own conſtruction of the word. Still, Sir, I had no thought to inſult over your miſerable *unprotected* ſtate. The extravagant outcry which you have made; and the arrogance with which you preſume to ſet your conventicles upon a footing with our own churches *, have provoked me to ſalute you with theſe unwelcome truths. Reſpect for individuals in Mr. Lindſey's congregation and in yours, as well as for you and him, would have reſtrained me from the uſe of a word, which I had perceived to be any otherwiſe reproachful, than as it might contain a ſtrong diſapprobation and cenſure of your doctrine, and a ſerious diſavowal of your authothority to exerciſe the ſacred function. If this is to be deemed reproach, I am not at liberty to abſtain from it. Your doctrine I muſt diſapprove and cenſure; becauſe I conceive it to be a groſs, I truſt not a willful, corruption of the word of God. If your authority, I ſpeak not now of the authority which derives from human laws; but even in *that* you are deficient; for a meer exemption from civil penalties, which ſtill is more than you enjoy, differs from authority, juſt as the King's pardon differs from his favour: if your ſpiritual authority, as miniſters of the word and ſacraments, is wrongfully called in queſtion; you muſt bear with the prejudices of a churchman, who, when he reviews the practice of the primitive ages; when he ponders our Saviour's parting promiſe to be always preſent with the Apoſtles, the delegated

* "———our places of worſhip are as legal as yours— "equally known to the laws and protected by them." Letters to Dr. Horſley, p. 112.

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preachers of the goſpel, even to the end of the world; when he connects it with the hiſtory of the firſt ordinations, and with the great ſtreſs laid upon the Biſhop's authority, by Clemens, the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, by Ignatius, the diſciple of St. John, and by the whole church for many ages; allows himſelf to be eaſily perſuaded, that the authority of the commiſſion, under which he acts, is ſomething more than meer human legiſlation can convey; and, while he would abhor to inforce civil penalties, may think it his duty occaſionally to proteſt againſt a ſpiritual uſurpation. Indeed, Sir, when I revolve in my thoughts the various diſorders and diſtractions, which I have ſeen in my own country within the compaſs of my own life, ariſing from the irregular zeal of ſelf-conſtituted teachers of religion; when I reflect, how the unity of the church hath been torn, how tender conſciences are every day diſturbed with groundleſs ſcruples, and melancholy tempers driven to inſanity; how the ſimplicity of the vulgar hath been firſt abuſed, and their principles in the end unſettled; when I recollect, how eminently the State hath lately been endangered, and the proteſtant cauſe diſgraced, by a combination of wild fanatics, pretending to aſſociate for the preſervation of the reformed religion; when I conſider, how by theſe ſcandals the true religion hath itſelf been brought into diſcredit; how it hath been injured by attempts to inflame devotion on the one hand, and by theories fabricated to reduce the myſtery of its doctrines on the other; when I conſider that the root of all theſe evils hath been the prevalency of a principle, of which you ſeem diſpoſed

to

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to be an advoacte, that every man who hath credit enough to collect a congregation, hath a right, over which the magiſtrate cannot without tyranny exerciſe controul, to celebrate divine worſhip according to his own form, and to propagate his own opinions: I am inclined to be jealous of a principle, which hath proved, I had almoſt ſaid, ſo ruinous; and I lean the more to the opinion, that the commiſſion of a miniſtry, perpetuated by regular ſucceſſion, is ſomething more than a dream of cloyſtered gownmen, or a tale impoſed upon the vulgar, to ſerve the ends of avarice and ambition. For whatever confuſion human folly may admit, a divine inſtitution muſt have within itſelf a proviſion for harmony and order. And upon theſe principles, though I wiſh that all indulgence ſhould be ſhewn to tender conſciences, and will ever be an advocate for the largeſt toleration that may be conſiſtent with political wiſdom, being indeed perſuaded, that the reſtraints of human laws muſt be uſed with the greateſt gentleneſs and moderation, to be rendered means of ſtrengthening the bands of Chriſtian peace and amity; yet I could wiſh to plant a principle of ſevere reſtraint in the conſciences of men. I could wiſh, that the importance of the miniſteral office were conſidered; that the practice of antiquity were regarded; and that it might not ſeem a matter of perfect indifference to the laity, to what houſe of worſhip they reſort. I cannot admit, that every aſſembly of grave and virtuous men, in which grave and virtuous men take upon them to officiate, is to be dignified with the appellation of a church; and for ſuch irregular aſ-

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ſemblies, which are not churches, I could wiſh to find a name of diſtinction void of opprobrium. As ſuch I uſed the word conventicle; as expreſſing great irregularity (which I muſt expreſs, wo! is me if I expreſs it not) but no infamy of the aſſemblies to which I applied it. If you are ſtill diſpoſed to be indignant about this harmleſs word; recollect I beſeech you, with what reſpect you have yourſelf treated the venerable body to which I belong, the Clergy of the eſtabliſhment. You divide it into two claſſes only; the Ignorant, and the Inſincere*. Have I no ſhare in this opprobrium of my order? Have I no right to be indignant in my turn?

S. STILL

* Dr. Prieſtley, in his Hiſtory of Corruptions (Vol. I. p. 147) ſays of the Trinitarians of the preſent age, under which denomination it is evident he alludes to the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church, for he afterwards deſcribes theſe Trinitarians as perſons "to all of whom the emoluments of the eſtabliſhment are equally acceſſible;" he ſays of theſe perſons, that "they are all reducible to two claſſes, viz. that "of thoſe who, if they were ingenuous, would rank with "Socinians, believing that there is no proper divinity in "Chriſt beſides that of the father; or elſe with Tritheiſts, "holding three equal and diſtinct Gods." The firſt claſs ſurely muſt be inſincere, as not believing what they profeſs: the ſecond ignorant, as not perceiving what it is that they believe. In the concluſion of his Hiſtory (vol. II. p. 471) he ſays, that all that is urged in defence of the preſent ſyſtem, by men of the greateſt eminence in the church, who have appeared as its advocates, "is ſo palpably weak, that it is "barely poſſible they ſhould be in earneſt—in thinking their "arguments have that weight in themſelves, which they wiſh "them to have with others." And he ſpeaks of this inſincerity

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8. STILL looking forward to the time, when after all that is paſt, we ſhall mutually forgive, and be ourſelves forgiven, I remain,

DEAR SIR,

Your very humble Servant, &c.

Fulham Palace,
June 15th 1784.

cerity of the defenders of the eſtabliſhment, as a thing ſo notorious, that it may be reckoned " one of the worſt ſymptoms of the preſent times." After all this, in his appendix to his Second Letters, he denies that he ever intended to make that diviſion of the whole body of the eſtabliſhed clergy, which I aſcribe to him, into the two claſſes of the Ignorant and the Inſincere; he treats the charge as a calumny, from which he juſtifies himſelf, by producing a long paſſage from one of his ſermons, in which he profeſſes to hold the Church of England in no leſs eſtimation than the Church of Rome.

APPENDIX.

N°. I.

Gentleman's Magazine for October 1783, p. 842.

MR. URBAN,

No. I. I WAS formerly a pupil of Dr. Harwood, and read with my learned and worthy maſter Thucydides, Sophocles, and the life of Moſes, in a magnificent edition of Philo, printed by the learned Mr. Bowyer; and wonder that Dr. Horſley ſhould aſſert, as he is repreſented to do by the learned and ingenious Mr. Maty in his New Review, that ὅτος is ſpoken of *perſons* only; when it is applied to any thing of which the writer is ſpeaking, that happens to be of the maſculine gender. For inſtance, it is prædicated of bread *twice* in John vi. 50 and 58, ὅτος ἐϛι ὁ ἄρτος, and of a ſtone, Luke xx. 17, *the ſame*; viz. ſtone, ὅτος is *become head of the corner*. Controverſialiſts are apt to overſhoot the mark.

GRÆCULUS.

N°. II.

N°. II.

Gentleman's Magazine for November 1783, p. 944.

MR. URBAN,

No. II.

BE pleaſed, Sir, to inform your correſpondent, *Græculus*, that Dr. Horſley has not aſſerted of the Greek pronoun ἅτος, that it is ſpoken of perſons *only*. He renders it indeed, in the ſecond verſe of the firſt chapter of St. John's goſpel, by the words "This "Perſon," and he ſays, in a parentheſis, that "this "is its natural force." And this, Sir, may be; although by the uſage of the Greek writers, it is applicable, as *Græculus* with great truth remarks, to any thing of which the writer is ſpeaking, that happens to be of the maſculine gender: for few words, in any language, are confined to their natural and primary meaning. But, ſince the application of the word is confeſſedly ſo general in the beſt writers, *Græculus* will perhaps be apt to put the queſtion, how ſhould Dr. Horſley know, that "This perſon" is more the natural ſenſe of ἅτος than "This Loaf," or this any thing? Perhaps Dr. Horſley has obſerved, that it is peculiar to the two pronouns ἅτος and ἄνλος, to be uſed of any one of the three perſons. Which is one argument, that their proper ſenſe is perſonal. Perhaps Dr. Horſley has obſerved, that the pronoun ἅτος, when it is demonſtrative of any thing which has no perſon, and which the writer would not perſonify, is

No. II. is often put in the *neuter* gender, although the noun, which it repreſents, be maſculine——ἐπειδαν δε ταυτα λυσητε——*after you have abrogated theſe* LAWS—νομους. Demoſth. Olynth. iii.—τουτο ἐστι το σωμα μου. this [i. e. this bread, ἀρτος] is my body. Matt. xxvi. 6. This is another argument that ὁυτος is naturally demonſtrative of a perſon. For there are but three cauſes, to which the various anomalies of ſpeech may be referred. Ignorance, negligence, deſign. Thoſe, which are frequent in the beſt writers, can be aſcribed to neither of the two firſt cauſes. They muſt have ariſen therefore from the third. But the third, deſign, implies an end. And what ſhould be the end of this anomaly of gender, in the word ὁυτος, but that it was the means of avoiding an appearance of a *proſopopœia*, where no *proſopopœia* was intended.

2. Perhaps *Græculus*, though perfectly right in his remark, that ὁυτος may be demonſtrative of any thing of which the Greek name is maſculine, has been unfortunate in his ſelection of paſſages in proof of it. Perhaps of the three, which he has produced, two are nothing to his purpoſe. Perhaps ὁυτος ἐστιν ὁ ἀρτος, &c. in both the texts in St. John, ſhould be rendered "This perſon is the bread, &c." i. e. I am the bread, &c. It may be ſuppoſed that our Lord pointed to himſelf, when he ſaid this. As the Baptiſt points to himſelf, when he ſays, Ὁυτος γαρ ἐστιν ὁ ῥηθεις, &c. "For this perſon is the perſon ſpoken of, &c." i. e. For I am the perſon ſpoken of, &c. Matt. iii. 3. For that theſe are the Baptiſt's not the hiſtorian's words, is evident from the form, in which the following

following ſentence is begun. Αυτος δε ὁ Ιωαννης. "Now "this ſame John, &c." a form which marks the writer's reſumption of his narrative, interrupted by the inſertion of John's words. No. II.

3. PERHAPS Dr. Horſley had not erred, had he affirmed that, in John i. 2. ὁτος muſt neceſſarily be rendered by "This Perſon." The utmoſt liberty of choice, which the context leaves, is between *two* expoſitions only. "This Perſon" or "This Word." If the latter be adopted, the ſecond verſe will be only a uſeleſs repetition of what had been before affirmed. Whereas in Dr. Horſley's view of it, it contains an explicit aſſertion of the perſonality of the Logos, which with great propriety and ſignificance precedes the mention of his agency in the next verſe.

4. PERHAPS to have redde ſome two or three difficult authors with a maſter, may have made *Græculus* almoſt a match for the brighteſt boys in the upper forms of our public ſchools. Perhaps ſomething more ſhould be done in the ſtudy of the Greek language, before a man begin to play the critic in it. Ἡ γαρ των λογων κρισις πολλης ἐστι πειρας τελειὁταιον ἐπιγεννημα.

I am Sir,

your moſt obedient,

PERHAPS.

N°.

Nº III.

Short Strictures on Dr. Prieſtley's Letters to Dr. Horſley, by an unknown hand.

No. III. LETTERS to Dr. Horſley, p. 9. Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. Dr. P. ſhould produce an inſtance, where the whole phraſe of *coming in the fleſh* is applied to the birth or appearances of any meer man. The inſtances alledged by him prove nothing to his purpoſe.

P. 13. The epiſtles of Ignatius. Dr. P. is certainly in the right to reprobate theſe epiſtles if he can. They ſubvert all his theology and hiſtory *. But who are theſe learned in general that have given them up as ſpurious? There are the names of great critics on the other ſide: of whoſe arguments Archbiſhop Wake has given a judicious ſummary in his preliminary diſcourſe; and till they are refuted, Dr. Horſley has an undoubted right to appeal to theſe epiſtles, as containing the ſentiments of an apoſtolical father.

P. 14. If Dr. P. could, prove, that the Nazarenes held the ſame doctrines with the Ebionites, what would it avail his cauſe? Could he prove by this medium, that the Nazarenes *continued* in the doctrine of the Apoſtles, and that the reputed catholic church fell off from it? Did the Ebionites learn from the Apoſtles, that John the Baptiſt came preaching in the days of Herod the king of Judea; that

* The chief of them are mentioned by Cave under Ignatius.

Chriſt

Chriſt deſcended into Jeſus in the form of a dove at his baptiſm; cum multis aliis? See Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxx. § 14. No. III.

24. HERE and throughout, Dr. P. ſuppoſes the Unitarian doctrine to have had a general prevalence among the the gentile Chriſtians, and univerſal among the Jewiſh. Does this well agree, with reſpect to the gentiles, with his quotation from Origen at the bottom of page 20?

THE much controverted paſſage of Juſtin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho *, and the meaning of Ἡμετέρου γένους, are well illuſtrated by Mr. Bingham, in his Vindication of the doctrine and liturgy of the Church of England, printed at Oxford 1774, page 23. There were according to Juſtin, SOME countrymen of his, Jews and Samaritans, "who confeſs him to be the Chriſt, yet affirm him "to be a meer man." The ſame Juſtin ſays in another place, Firſt Apol. p. 78, Ed. Thirlby, that he had obſerved more and truer Chriſtians from among the gentiles, than from among the Jews and Samaritans. This paſſage [which helps to confirm Mr. Bingham's tranſlation of Ἡμετέρου γένους] compared with the other, contains the teſtimony of Juſtin, that there were only SOME of the Jews and Samaritans, and ſtill fewer of the gentiles, profeſſing to believe in Chriſt, who affirmed him to be a meer man.

Pag. 39. Dr. P. who ſeems to be very moderately ſkilled in Greek, may give a faulty tranſlation

* See Prieſtley, page 127.

ſometimes

No. III. ſometimes through inadvertency. But what ſhall we ſay for his rendering *ἀιτίαν ἔυλογον, a ſpecious pretence?* Can he really think, that Athanaſius meant to ſpeak in this ſtile of the conduct of the Apoſtles? Αἰτία ἔυλογος occurs in Chryſoſtom on Matth. xxiv. 42. (tom. ii. p. 448. Ed. Savil) where tho' *ἀἰτία* ſignifies ſomewhat differently, ἔυλογος bears the ſame ſenſe, as here, of wiſe and reaſonable.

In the ſame paſſage ἔρχεσθαι is miſtranſlated. As the preſent infinitives have ſometimes a future ſenſe in the beſt claſſic authors, it here means a Meſſiah TO COME; as the next ſentence evinces, where Chriſt already come is ſaid, ἐληλυθέναι.

49. ANOTHER inaccurate verſion of Athanaſius.

50. ANOTHER of the like kind from Chryſoſtom. Dr. P. makes him ſay, Our Saviour *never* taught his own divinity in expreſs words. Chryſoſtom, I apprehend, ſays, that he did not, every where, or, on all occaſions, *οὐ παντάχοῦ*, ſpeak plainly of his own divinity. In the judgment of Chryſoſtom he ſometimes did ſo. See on John vi. 35, 36. viii. 58. x. 30.

56. LAST paragraph. Caiaphas adjures our Saviour by the living God to tell them, *Whether thou be the Chriſt, the Son of God?* Our Lord avows, theſe characters, and adds, *Nevertheleſs* [rather, moreover] *I ſay unto you, Hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of power.* How can Dr. Prieſtley be ſure, in what ſenſe Caiaphas underſtood our Lord's anſwer, when he rent his cloths,

and

and accuſed him of blaſphemy? Was the notion of a Son of God ſuperior to all created beings, then unknown among the Jews? See, beſides Bp. Bull's Defenſ. Fidei Nicænæ, cap. 1. ſect. 1. § 16. p. 13. a remarkable paſſage quoted from Philo Jud. by Dr. Randoph, Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, part I. p. 29. No. III.

LETTER V.

Dr. P. makes the fathers *acknowledge*, that the Apoſtles did not preach the divinity of Chriſt *early*, and confidently ſuppoſes them *never* to have taught it.

According to the more general opinion, St. Matthew wrote his goſpel early and for the Jews. In the opening of this goſpel he applies the name Emmanuel to our Lord, and gives his own interpretation of it, *God with us:* by which, plain people conceive him to mean what St. Paul expreſſes, *God manifeſt in the fleſh*; and the Apoſtolical Ignatius, *God appearing in the form of a man.* Ad. Eph. xix. If we are led into an error, it is by taking St. Matthew's words in their literal and obvious ſenſe; and was he leſs ſolicitous about the truth than even Dr. P. himſelf? If Dr. P. had been to write a goſpel, according to his own theology, would he have ſet out with

No. III. with ſuch an application and interpretation of the name Emmanuel? *Quod tu non fecerís, Ego feci?* might St. Paul aſk; who writes with the greateſt ſimplicity, and never uſes any amplification of any ſubject treated by him: and, as we may juſtly conclude, would not here have ſpoken of Chriſt as he has done, but becauſe he had very different notions of his dignity from thoſe of Dr. P.: to declare which notions he was not afraid of Jewiſh prejudices and clamour.

In the ſame goſpel our Lord is introduced declaring, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him." Here the negative οὐδεὶς being univerſal, we ſeem to be told, that the Father and Son are incomprehenſible to all created intelligences; and that all they can really know of the Father, muſt be in and thro' the Son, by his illuminating ſpirit. Does ſuch a declaration conſiſt with Dr. P.'s plan, with what our Lord ſays of himſelf in the next verſe but one, I am meek and lowly in heart? *Utique parum modeſtè (ſit verbo venia) de ſeipſo locutus eſt Chriſtus, aut alios loquentes audivit, ſi nihil interea præter merum hominem ſe eſſe noverit.* Burnet de Fide et Officiis, p. 20*.

The ſame Saviour, in the concluding paragraph of this goſpel, commands his Apoſtles to evangelize all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Dr.

* This is quoted by Dr. Randolph, Vind. Part II. p. 42. where a ſimilar paſſage is cited from St. Chryſoſtom.

P.

P. conſiders the Holy Spirit as an attribute of the Father, not a perſon. But does our Lord, if he had only an exalted humanity, thruſt himſelf in between the moſt high, and one of his incommunicable attributes? or does he join two perſons with an attribute, in a moſt ſolemn form of words, which leads us almoſt inevitably to believe, that the third is a perſon alſo? Would ſuch a conduct appear ſuitable to his care and tenderneſs to guide his flock into the whole truth? The ſuppoſition ſeems impoſſible; and nothing to be more certain than that the very firſt evangeliſt, in full harmony with all the ſucceeding ſacred writers, exhibits to us the divinity of Chriſt, in the beginning, middle, and end of his goſpel. No. III.

It is objected to this form of baptiſm, that the uſe of it does not appear any where in the Acts of the Apoſtles. This objection is, I think, well anſwered by Mr. Bingham, Vindicat. p. 37—41. particularly from Acts xix.

P. 63. Towards the end of the firſt paragraph, Dr. P. ſeems to betray ſome ſuſpicions, that St. Paul did in truth teach the divinity of Chriſt.

P. 69, Laſt paragraph. The reaſoning appears rather extraordinary on the paſſage of Athanaſius, who ſeems made by Dr. P. to conſider things in the ſame light, between which he is ſtudious to point out an eternal difference.

LETTER VII.

No. III.

P. 92. "IF the doctrine of the Trinity be true, it is no doubt in the higheſt degree important and intereſting." So Dr. P. can ſay, when it ſerves his purpoſe. But how does this agree with his previous obſervations, N°. IV. p. 85, &c.?

P. 133. IT is ſomewhat hard to diſcover how the remark on Euſebius, and his treatment of the Unitarians, *at that time very numerous*, agrees with the obſervation in the preceding paragraph.

P. 135. WAS the hymn, which as Pliny tells us in his noted epiſtle, was ſung to Chriſt *quaſi Deo*, novel in the time of Paul of Samoſata?

P. 136. Dr. P. ſhould, I think, have prefixed that which ſeems to be his ruling maxim, that the human mind is competent to ſearch all things, even the deep things of God.

WHETHER he, or Mr. Burgh, in the firſt chapter of his Scriptural Confutation, lays down the province of reaſon in the better way, let others determine.

N°. IV.

1 W. & M. c. 18.

No. IV.

PROVIDED always, That neither this act, nor any clauſe, article, or thing herein contained, ſhall extend———to give any eaſe, benefit, or advantage to

to——any perſon that ſhall deny in his preaching or writing the doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity, as it is declared in the aforeſaid articles of religion. No. VI.

N°. V.

1. W. & M. c. 18.

PROVIDED always, That no congregation or aſſembly for religion, ſhall be permitted or allowed by this act, until the place of ſuch meeting ſhall be certified to the biſhop of the dioceſe, or to the archdeacon of the archdeaconry, or to the juſtices of the peace at the general or quarter ſeſſions of the peace for the county, city, or place in which ſuch meeting ſhall be held, and regiſtered in the ſaid biſhop's or archdeacon's court reſpectively, or recorded at the ſaid general or quarter ſeſſions.

N°. VI.

19 G. III. c. 44.

——— be it enacted, ——— That every perſon diſſenting from the church in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, or pretending to holy orders, being a preacher or teacher of any congregation of diſſenting Proteſtants who——ſhall take the oaths, and make and ſubſcribe the declaration againſt popery, required by the ſaid act (1 W. & M. c. 18.) and ſhall alſo make and ſubſcribe a declaration in the words following, videlicet.

No. VI.

" I A. B. do ſolemnly declare in the preſence of " Almighty God, that I am a Chriſtian and a Pro- " teſtant, and as ſuch, that I believe that the ſcrip- " tures of the Old and New Teſtament, as com- " monly received among Proteſtant churches, do con- " tain the revealed will of God; and that I do receive " the ſame as the rule of my doctrine and practice."

ſhall be —— entitled to all the exemptions, benefits, privileges, and advantages granted to Proteſtant diſſenting miniſters by 1 W. & M. c. 18. and by 10 A. c. —— and every ſuch perſon, qualifying himſelf as aforeſaid, ſhall be exempted from ſerving in the militia of this kingdom, and ſhall alſo be exempted from any impriſonment or other puniſhment by virtue of the act of uniformity, &c.

A

SERMON,

ON THE

INCARNATION,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH

OF

St. MARY NEWINGTON,

In SURREY, Dec. 25, 1785.

LUKE I. 28.

——Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: Bleſſed art thou among women.

THAT ſhe, who in theſe terms was ſaluted by an angel, ſhould in after ages become an object of ſuperſtitious adoration, is a thing far leſs to be wondered, than that men profeſſing to build their whole hopes of immortality on the promiſes delivered in the ſacred books, and cloſely interwoven with the hiſtory of our Saviour's Life, ſhould queſtion the truth of the meſſage which the angel brought. Some nine years ſince, the Chriſtian Church was no leſs aſtoniſhed than offended, by an extravagant attempt* to heighten, as it was pretended, the importance of the Chriſtian Revelation, by overturning one of thoſe firſt principles of natural religion, which had for ages been conſidered as the baſis, upon which the whole ſuperſtructure of Revelation ſtands. The notion of an immaterial principle in man, which, without an immediate exertion of the divine power to the expreſs purpoſe of its deſtruction, muſt neceſſarily ſurvive the diſſolution of the body; the notion of an

* Diſquiſitions relating to Matter and Spirit, &c. London 1777.

immortal ſoul, was condemned and exploded as an invention of heathen philoſophy. Death was repreſented as an utter extinction of the whole man, and the evangelical doctrine of a reſurrection of the body, in an improved ſtate, to receive again its immortal inhabitant, was heightened into the myſtery of a reproduction of the annihilated perſon. How a perſon once annihilated could be re-produced, ſo as to be the ſame perſon which had formerly exiſted, when no principle of ſameneſs, nothing neceſſarily permanent, was ſuppoſed to enter the original compoſition; how the preſent perſon could be intereſted in the future perſon's fortunes; why *I* ſhould be at all concerned for the happineſs or miſery of the man, who ſome ages hence ſhall be raiſed from my aſhes; when the future man could be no otherwiſe the ſame with me, than as he was arbitrarily to be called the ſame, becauſe his body was to be compoſed of the ſame matter which now compoſes mine: theſe difficulties were but ill explained. It was thought a ſufficient recommendation of the ſyſtem with all its difficulties, that the promiſe of a reſurrection of the body ſeemed to acquire a new importance from it (but the truth is, that it would loſe its whole importance if this ſyſtem could be eſtabliſhed, ſince it would become a meer prediction concerning a future race of men, and would be no promiſe to any men now exiſting), and the notion of the ſoul's natural immortality was deemed an unſeemly appendage of a Chriſtian's belief, for this ſingular reaſon, that it had

had been entertained by wife and virtuous Heathens, who had received no light from the Chriſtian, nor, as it was ſuppoſed, from any earlier Revelation.

It might have been expected, that this anxiety to extinguiſh every ray of hope, which beams not from the glorious promiſes of the Goſpel, would have been accompanied with the moſt entire ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding to the letter of the written word; the moſt anxious ſollicitude for the credit of the ſacred writers; the warmeſt zeal to maintain every circumſtance in the hiſtory of our Saviour's life, which might add authority to his precepts, and weight to his promiſes, by heightening the dignity of his perſon. But ſo inconſiſtent with itſelf is human folly; that they who at one time ſeemed to think it a preliminary, to be required of every one who would come to a right belief of the Goſpel, that he ſhould unlearn and unbelieve what Philoſophy had been thought to have in common with the Goſpel; as if reaſon and revelation could in nothing agree; upon other occaſions diſcover an averſion to the belief of any thing, which at all puts our reaſon to a ſtand: and in order to wage war with myſtery with the more advantage, they ſcruple not to deny, that that Spirit which enlightened the firſt preachers in the delivery of their oral inſtruction, and rendered them infallible teachers of the age in which they lived, directed them in the compoſition of thoſe writings, which they left for the edification of

of ſucceeding ages *. They pretend to have made diſcoveries of inconcluſive reaſoning in the Epiſtles †; of doubtful facts in the Goſpels; and appealing from the teſtimony of the Apoſtles to their own judgments, they have not ſcrupled to declare their opinion, that the *Miraculous Conception of our Lord* is a ſubject, "with reſpect to which any perſon is at full "liberty to think, as the evidence ſhall appear to him, "without any impeachment of his faith or charac-"ter as a Chriſtian ‡." And leſt a ſimple avowal of this extraordinary opinion ſhould not be ſufficiently offenſive, it is accompanied with certain obſcure inſinuations §, the reſerved meaning of which we are little anxious to divine, which ſeem intended to prepare the world not to be ſurprized, if ſomething ſtill more extravagant, if more extravagant may be, ſhould in a little time be declared.

We are aſſembled this day to commemorate our Lord's Nativity. It is not as the Birth-day of a Prophet that this day is ſanctified; but as the Anniverſary of that great event, which had been announced by the whole ſucceſſion of Prophets from the beginning of the world, and in which the predictions concerning the manner of the Meſſiah's advent received

* "I have frequently declared myſelf not to be a believer in the inſpiration of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles as writers." Dr. Prieſtley's Letters to Dr. H. Part I. p. 132.

† Hiſtory of Corruption, vol. II. p. 370.

‡ Letter to Dr. H. part I. p. 132.

§ Letter to Dr. H. part I. p. 54.

their

their compleat and literal accompliſhment. In the predictions, as well as in the correſponding event, the circumſtance of the Miraculous Conception makes ſo principal a part, that we ſhall not eaſily find ſubjects of meditation more ſuited either to the ſeaſon, or to the times, than theſe two points; the importance of this doctrine, as an article of the Chriſtian faith, and the ſufficiency of the evidence by which the fact is ſupported.

First for the importance of the doctrine, as an article of the faith; it is evidently the foundation of the whole diſtinction between the character of Chriſt, in the condition of a man, and that of any other Prophet. Had the conception of Jeſus been in the natural way; had he been the fruit of Mary's marriage with her huſband; his intercourſe with the Deity could have been of no other kind, than the nature of any other man might have equally admitted: an intercourſe of no higher kind than the Prophets enjoyed, when their minds were enlightened by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. The information conveyed to Jeſus might have been clearer and more extenſive, than any imparted to any former Prophet; but the manner and the means of communication muſt have been the ſame. The Holy Scriptures ſpeak a very different language. They tell us that the "ſame God who ſpake in "times paſt to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath "in theſe latter days ſpoken unto us by his Son*;"

* Heb. I. 1. 2.

evidently

evidently eſtabliſhing a diſtinction of Chriſtianity from preceding revelations upon a diſtinction between the two characters of a Prophet of God, and of God's Son. Moſes, the great Lawgiver of the Jews, is deſcribed in the book of DEUTERONOMY as ſuperior to all ſucceeding Prophets for the intimacy of his intercourſe with God, for the variety of his miracles, and for the authority with which he was inveſted. "There aroſe not a Prophet in Iſrael like unto "Moſes, whom Jehovah knew face to face: in all "the ſigns and wonders which Jehovah ſent him to "do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his ſer-"vants, and to all his land; and in all that mighty "hand, and in all the great terror, which Moſes "ſhewed in the ſight of all Iſrael*." Yet this great Prophet, raiſed up to be the leader and the legiſlator of God's people; this greateſt of the Prophets, with whom Jehovah converſed face to face, as a man talketh with his friend; bore, as we are told, to Jeſus, the humble relation of a ſervant to a ſon †. And leſt the ſuperiority on the ſide of the Son ſhould be deemed a meer ſuperiority of the office to which he was appointed, we are told, that the Son is "higher than the angels," being the "effulgence of God's glory, the expreſs image of "his perſon ‡," the God "whoſe throne is for "ever and ever, the ſcepter of whoſe kingdom is "a ſcepter of righteouſneſs §:" and this high dignity of the Son is alleged as a motive for religious obe-

* Deut. xxxiv. 10—12. † Heb. iii. 5. 6.
‡ Heb. i. 3—6. § Hebr i. 8.

dience

dience to his commands, and for reliance on his promiſes. It is this indeed which gives ſuch authority to his precepts, and ſuch certainty to his whole doctrine, as render faith in him the firſt duty of religion. Had Chriſt been a meer Prophet, to believe in Chriſt had been the ſame thing as to believe in John the Baptiſt. The meſſages indeed, announced on the part of God by Chriſt, and by John the Baptiſt, might have been different; and the importance of the different meſſages, unequal; but the principle of belief in either muſt have been the ſame.

HENCE it appears, that the intercourſe which Chriſt, as a man, held with God, was different in kind from that which the greateſt of the Prophets ever had enjoyed; and yet how it ſhould differ, otherwiſe than in the degree of frequency and intimacy, it will not be very eaſy to explain, unleſs we adhere to the faith tranſmitted to us from the primitive ages, and believe that the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, ſo joined to himſelf the holy thing which was formed in Mary's womb, that the two natures, from the commencement of the virgin's conception, made one perſon. Between God and any living being, having a diſtinct perſonality of his own, ſeparate from the Godhead, no other communion could obtain, than what ſhould conſiſt in the action of the Divine Spirit upon the faculties of the ſeparate perſon. This

This communion with God the Prophets enjoyed. But Jesus, according to the primitive doctrine, was so united to the ever-living word, that the very existence of the man consisted in this union*. We shall not indeed find this proposition, that the existence of Mary's Son consisted from the first, and ever shall consist, in his union with the Word; we shall not find this proposition in these terms in Scripture. Would to God the necessity never had arisen

* So Theodoret in the fourth of the seven dialogues about the Trinity, published under the name of Athanasius. The persons in this dialogue are an Orthodox Believer and an Apollinarian. The Apollinarian asks, Ουκ ἐστιν ἀν Ιησους ἀνθρωπος; the Believer replies, ἀνευ τε Λογε ἀτε ἀνθρωπον ἀυτον οἰδα ὑποσαντα, την γαρ ὑπαρξιν ἀυτε εν τη ἑνωσει τε Λογε γνωριζω. To the same purpose Joannes Damascenus, —— ὁ γαρ προϋποσαση καθ' ἑαυτην σαρκι ἡνωθη ὁ θειος Λογος, αλλ' ἐνοικησας τη γαστρι της ἁγιας παρθενε ἀπεριγραπτως, ἐν τη ἑαυτε ὑποσασει ἐκ των ἁγιων της ἀειπαρθενε ἁιματων, σαρκα ἐψυχωμενην ψυχη λογικη τε και νοερα ὑπεστησατο, ἀπαρχην προσλαβομενος τε ἀνθρωπειε φυραματος, ΑΥΤΟΣ Ὁ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΗ ΣΑΡΚΙ ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ. De Fide Orthodoxâ, lib. 3. cap. II. and again, cap. VII. Εσαρκωται τοινυν —— ὡστε ἀυτην χρηματισαι τη σαρκι ὑποσασιν ἡ τε Θεε Λογε ὑποσασις. So also Gregory Nazianzen, εἰ τις διαπεπλασθαι τον ανθρωπον, ειθ' ὑποδεδυκεναι λεγοι θεον, καλαπριλος. —— Ειτις ὡς ἐν προφητη λεγοι καλα χαριν ἐνηργηκεναι, ἀλλα μη καθ' ἁσιαν συνηφθαι τε και συναπτεσθαι, ειη κενος της κρειττονος ἐνεργειας, μαλλον δε πληρης της ἐναντιας. Epist. ad Cledon. I.

of

of ſtating the diſcoveries of Revelation in metaphyſical propoſitions. The inſpired writers delivered their ſublimeſt doctrines in popular language, and abſtained, as much as it was poſſible to abſtain, from a philoſophical phraſeology. By the perpetual cavils of gainſayers, and the difficulties which they have raiſed; later teachers, in the aſſertion of the ſame doctrines, have been reduced to the unpleaſing neceſſity of availing themſelves of the greater preciſion of a leſs familiar language.

But if we find not the ſame propoſition in the ſame words in Scripture, we find in Scripture what amounts to a clear proof of the propoſition. We find the characteriſtic properties of both natures, the Human and the Divine, aſcribed to the ſame perſon. We read of Jeſus, that he ſuffered from hunger and from fatigue: that he wept for grief, and was diſtreſſed with fear: that he was obnoxious to all the evils of humanity, except the propenſity to ſin. We read of the ſame Jeſus, that he had "Glory with "the Father before the world began*;" that "all "things were created by him†, both in heaven and "in earth, viſible and inviſible; whether they be "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or pow-"ers; all things were created by him, and for "him‡," and "he upholdeth all things by the "word of his power‖." And that we may in ſome

* John xvii. 5.
† John i. 3.
‡ Coloſſ. i. 16.
‖ Heb. i. 3.

ſort

ſort underſtand, how infirmity and perfection ſhould thus meet in the ſame perſon; we are told by St. John, that the "Word was made Fleſh."

It was clearly, therefore, the doctrine of Holy Writ, and nothing elſe, which the Fathers aſſerted in terms borrowed from the ſchools of philoſophy, when they affirmed that the very principle of perſonality and individual exiſtence in Mary's Son was union with the uncreated Word*. A doctrine in which a Miraculous Conception would have been implied, had the thing not been recorded; ſince a man, conceived in the ordinary way, would have derived the principles of his exiſtence from the meer phyſical powers of generation. Union with the Divine Nature could not have been the principle of an exiſtence phyſically derived from Adam; and that intimate union of God and man in the Redeemer's perſon, which the Scriptures ſo clearly aſſert, had been a phyſical impoſſibility.

* Ὁ ȣ̓ν Θεος Λογος σαρκωθεις, ȣτε την ἐν τῃ ψιλῃ θεωριᾳ κατανοȣμενην φυσιν ἀνελαϐεν (ȣ γαρ σαρκωσις τȣτο, ἀλλ' ἁπατη και πλασμα σαρκωσεως) ἀλλα την εν ατομῳ, την ἀυτην ȣ̓σαν τῃ ἐν τῳ ἐιδει (ἀπαρχην γαρ ἀνελαϐε τȣ ἡμετερȣ φυραματος) ȣ̓ καθ' ἑαυτην ὑποστασαν και ἀτομον χρηματισασαν προτερον, και ȣ̓τως ὑπ' ἀυτȣ προσληφθεισαν, αλλ' ἐν τῃ ἀυτȣ ὑποστασει ὑπαρξασαν· ἀυτη γαρ ἡ ὑποστασις τȣ Θεȣ Λογȣ ἐγενετο τῃ σαρκι ὑποστασις. Joann. Damaſcen. De Fide Orthodoxâ. lib. 3. cap. XI.

But

But we need not go ſo high, as to the Divine Nature of our Lord, to evince the neceſſity of his Miraculous Conception. It was neceſſary to the ſcheme of Redemption, by the Redeemer's offering of himſelf as an expiatory ſacrifice; that the manner of his conception ſhould be ſuch, that he ſhould in no degree partake of the natural pollution of the fallen race, whoſe guilt he came to atone, nor be included in the general condemnation of Adam's progeny. In what the ſtain of original ſin may conſiſt, and in what manner it may be propagated, it is not to my preſent purpoſe to enquire. It is ſufficient that Adam's crime, by the appointment of Providence, involved his whole poſterity in puniſhment. "In Adam," ſays the Apoſtle, "all die*." And for many lives thus forfeited, a ſingle life, itſelf a forfeit, had been no ranſom. Nor by the Divine ſentence only, inflicting death on the progeny, for the offence of the progenitor; but by the proper guilt of his own ſins, every one ſprung by natural deſcent from the loins of Adam, is a debtor to Divine Juſtice, and incapable of becoming a mediator for his brethren. "In many things," ſays St. James, "we offend all†." "If we ſay that we "have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves," ſaith St. John, "and the truth is not in us. And if any "man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, "Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propi-

* 1 Cor. xv. 22. † James iii. 2.

" tiation for our ſins*." Even we Chriſtians all offend, without exception even of the firſt and beſt Chriſtians, the Apoſtles. But St. John clearly ſeparates the righteous advocate from the maſs of thoſe offenders. That any Chriſtian is enabled, by the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, to attain to that degree of purity, which may entitle him to the future benefits of the Redemption, is itſelf a preſent benefit of the propitiation which hath been made for us: and he, who under the aſſault of every temptation maintained that unſullied innocence, which gives merit and efficacy to his Sacrifice and Interceſſion, could not be of the number of thoſe, whoſe offences called for an expiation, and whoſe frailties needed a Divine aſſiſtance, to raiſe them effectually from dead works to ſerve the Living God. In brief, the condemnation and the iniquity of Adam's progeny were univerſal. To reverſe the univerſal ſentence, and to purge the univerſal corruption, a Redeemer was to be found pure of every ſtain of inbred and contracted guilt. And ſince every perſon produced in the natural way could not but be of the contaminated race; the purity, requiſite to the efficacy of the Redeemer's Atonement, made it neceſſary, that the manner of his Conception ſhould be ſupernatural.

THUS you ſee the neceſſary connection of the Miraculous Conception with the other articles of the Chriſtian faith. The incarnation of the Divine

* 1 John i. 8. and ii. 1.

Word

Word, ſo roundly aſſerted by St. John, and ſo clearly implied in innumerable paſſages of Holy Writ, in any other way had been impoſſible; and the Redeemer's Atonement, inadequate and ineffectual. Inſomuch that, had the extraordinary manner of our Lord's generation made no part of the evangelical narrative, the opinion might have been defended, as a thing clearly implied in the evangelical doctrine.

On the other hand, it were not difficult to ſhew, that the Miraculous Conception, once admitted, naturally brings up after it the great doctrines of the Atonement and the Incarnation. The Miraculous Conception of our Lord, evidently implies ſome higher purpoſe of his coming, than the meer buſineſs of a teacher. The buſineſs of a teacher might have been performed by a meer man, enlightened by the prophetic ſpirit. For whatever inſtruction men have the capacity to receive, a man might have been made the inſtrument to convey. Had teaching, therefore, been the ſole purpoſe of our Saviour's coming, a meer man might have done the whole buſineſs; and the ſupernatural conception had been an unneceſſary miracle. He, therefore, who came in this miraculous way, came upon ſome higher buſineſs, to which a meer man was unequal. He came to be made a ſin-offering for us, "that we "might be made the righteouſneſs of God in "him*."

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

So cloſe, therefore, is the connection of this extraordinary fact with the cardinal doctrines of the Goſpel, that it may be juſtly deemed a neceſſary branch of the ſcheme of Redemption: and in no other light was it conſidered by St. Paul, who mentions it among the characteriſtics of the Redeemer, that he ſhould be "made of a woman*." In this ſhort ſentence St. Paul bears a remarkable teſtimony to the truth of the evangelical hiſtory in this circumſtance. And *you*, my brethren, have not ſo learned Chriſt, but that you will prefer the teſtimony of St. Paul to the raſh judgment of thoſe, who have dared to tax this "choſen veſſel" of the Lord with error and inaccuracy.

THE opinion of theſe men is indeed the leſs to be regarded; for the want of inſight, which they diſcover, into the real intereſts and proper connections of their own ſyſtem. It is by no means ſufficient for their purpoſe, that they inſiſt not on the belief of the Miraculous Conception. They muſt inſiſt upon the diſbelief of it; if they expect to make diſcerning men proſelytes to their Socinian doctrine. They muſt diſprove it; before they can reduce the Goſpel to what their ſcheme of interpretation makes it; a meer religion of nature, a ſyſtem of the beſt practical Deiſm, enforced by the ſanction of high rewards,

* Gal. iv. 4. "There is no reference to the Miraculous "Conception, either in the Book of Acts, or *in any of the* "*Epiſtles*." Dr. Prieſtley's Letters to Dr. H. p. 53.

and

and formidable puniſhments, in a future life; which are yet no rewards and no puniſhments, but ſimply the enjoyments and the ſufferings of a new race of men to be made out of old materials, and therefore conſtitute no ſanction, when the principles of the materialiſt are incorporated with thoſe of the Socinian in the finiſhed creed of the modern Unitarian.

HAVING ſeen the importance of the doctrine of the Miraculous Conception, as an article of our faith; let us in the next place conſider the ſufficiency of the evidence, by which the fact is ſupported.

WE have for it the expreſs teſtimony of two out of the four Evangeliſts: of St. Matthew, whoſe Goſpel was publiſhed in Judæa within a few years after our Lord's Aſcenſion; and of St. Luke, whoſe narrative was compoſed, as may be collected from the author's ſhort preface, to prevent the miſchief that was to be apprehended from ſome pretended hiſtories of our Saviour's life, in which the truth was probably blended with many legendary tales. It is very remarkable, that the fact of the Miraculous Conception ſhould be found in the firſt of the four Goſpels; written at a time when many of the near relations of the Holy Family muſt have been living, by whom the ſtory, had it been falſe, had been eaſily confuted: that it ſhould be found again in St. Luke's Goſpel; written for the peculiar uſe of the converted Gentiles, and for the expreſs purpoſe of furniſhing a ſummary of authentic facts, and of ſuppreſſing ſpurious narrations.

Was it not ordered by ſome peculiar providence of God, that the two great branches of the primitive church; the Hebrew congregations, for which St. Matthew wrote, and the Greek congregations, for which St. Luke wrote; ſhould find an expreſs record of the Miraculous Conception each in its proper Goſpel? Or if we conſider the teſtimony of the writers, ſimply as hiſtorians of the times in which they lived, without regard to their inſpiration, which is not admitted by the adverſary; were not Matthew and Luke, Matthew, one of the twelve Apoſtles of our Lord, and Luke, the companion of St. Paul, competent to examine the evidence of the facts, which they have recorded? Is it likely that they have recorded facts, upon the credit of a vague report, without examination? And was it reſerved for the Unitarians of the eighteenth century to detect their errors? St. Luke thought himſelf particularly well qualified for the work, in which he engaged, by his exact knowledge of the ſtory, which he undertook to write, in all its circumſtances from the very beginning. It is ſaid indeed by a writer of the very firſt antiquity, and high in credit, that his Goſpel was compoſed from St. Paul's ſermons. "Luke, the attendant of St. Paul," ſays Irenæus, "put into his book the Goſpel preached "by that Apoſtle." This being premiſed, attend I beſeech you, to the account which St. Luke gives of his own undertaking. "It ſeemed good to me alſo, "having had perfect underſtanding of all things from "the very firſt, to write unto thee in order, moſt ex-

"cellent

" cellent Theophilus, that thou mighteſt know the " certainty of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been in- " ſtructed." The laſt verſe might be more literally rendered " that thou might know the exact truth of " thoſe doctrines, wherein thou haſt been CATE- " CHISED." St. Luke's Goſpel therefore, if the writer's own word may be taken about his own work, is an hiſtorical expoſition of the *Catechiſm*, which Theophilus had learned, when he was firſt made a Chriſtian. The two firſt articles, in this hiſtorical expoſition, are the hiſtory of the Baptiſt's birth, and that of Mary's miraculous impregnation. We have much more therefore than the teſtimony of St. Luke, in addition to that of St. Matthew, to the truth of the fact of the Miraculous Conception: we have the teſtimony of St. Luke, that this fact was a part of the earlieſt catechetical inſtruction: a part of the catechiſm, no doubt, which St. Paul's converts learnt of the Apoſtle. Let this then be your anſwer, if any man ſhall aſk you a reaſon of this part of your faith; tell him, that you have been learning St. Paul's catechiſm.

FROM what hath been ſaid, you will eaſily perceive, that the evidence of the fact of our Lord's Miraculous Conception is anſwerable to the great importance of the doctrine; and you will eſteem it an objection of little weight, that the modern advocates of the Unitarian tenets cannot otherwiſe give a colour to their wretched cauſe, than by denying the inſpiration of the ſacred hiſtorians, that they may ſeem to themſelves at liberty to reject their teſtimony. You will remember, that the doctrines of the Chriſtian Revelation were

not originally delivered in a ſyſtem; but interwoven in the hiſtory of our Saviour's life. To ſay therefore, that the firſt preachers were not inſpired in the compoſition of the narratives in which their doctrine is conveyed, is nearly the ſame thing, as to deny their inſpiration in the general. You will perhaps think it incredible, that they, who were aſſiſted by the Divine Spirit when they preached, ſhould be deſerted by that Spirit, when they committed what they had preached to writing. You will think it improbable that they, who were endowed with the gift of diſcerning ſpirits ſhould be endowed with no gift of diſcerning the truth of facts. You will recollect one inſtance upon record, in which St. Peter detected a falſehood by the light of inſpiration: and you will perhaps be inclined to think, that it could be of no leſs importance to the Church, that the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts ſhould be enabled to detect falſehoods in the hiſtory of our Saviour's life; than that St. Peter ſhould be enabled to detect Ananias's lie about the ſale of his eſtate. You will think it unlikely that they who were ledde by the Spirit into all truth, ſhould be permitted to lead the whole Church for many ages into error: that they ſhould be permitted to leave behind them, as authentic memoirs of their Maſter's life, narratives compiled with little judgement or ſelection from the ſtories of the day, from facts and fictions in promiſcuous circulation. The credulity, which ſwallows theſe contradictions, while it ſtrains at myſteries, is not the faith which will remove mountains. The Ebionites of antiquity, little as they were famed for penetration and diſcernment, managed

naged however the affairs of the ſect with more diſcretion than our modern Unitarians. They queſtioned not the inſpiration of the books which they received; but they received only one book, a ſpurious copy of St. Matthew's Goſpel, curtailed of the two firſt chapters. You will think it no inconſiderable confirmation of the doctrine in queſtion; that the ſect, which firſt denied it, to palliate their infidelity, found it neceſſary to reject three of the Goſpels, and to mutilate the fourth.

Not in words therefore and in form, but with hearts full of faith and gratitude, you will join in the ſolemn ſervice of the day, and return thanks to God "who gave his only begotten Son to take "our nature upon him, and, as at this time, to be "born of a pure Virgin." You will alway remember that it is the great uſe of a ſound faith, that it furniſhes the moſt effectual motives to a good life. You will therefore not reſt in the merit of a ſpeculative faith. You will make it your conſtant endeavour that your lives may adorn your profeſſion——that "your light may ſo ſhine before "men, that they, ſeeing your good works, may "glorify your Father which is in heaven."

REMARKS

REMARKS

UPON

Dr. PRIESTLEY's

SECOND LETTERS

TO THE

ARCHDEACON of St. ALBAN's,

WITH

PROOFS OF CERTAIN FACTS ASSERTED BY THE ARCHDEACON

PART FIRST.

REMARKS.

WHEN firſt I had the pleaſure to peruſe the Second Letters addreſſed to me by Doctor Prieſtley, upon the ſubject of our Lord's divinity; I was not ill ſatisfied to find the performance ſuch, both in matter and ſtyle, as might have releaſed me from all obligation to a formal reply; although I had made no previous declaration of the reſolution, in which I am fixed, never to enter into a uſeleſs diſquiſition upon the main queſtion—an exhauſted ſubject, in which nothing new is to be ſaid on either ſide;—nor to purſue an interminable controverſy, with one, whom, with high reſpect for his natural abilities, and for his attainments in ſome parts of learning, I muſt ſtill call an inſufficient antagoniſt. The diſlike of trouble in my natural diſpoſition is ſo ſtrong, as too often, I fear, to ſtrive for the maſtery with better principles. I was well ſatisfied to find, that in the conteſt with Dr. Prieſtley, I was at liberty to indulge my indolence, without ſeeming to deſert my cauſe: that his book, abound-

PART I.

ing

PART I. ing in new ſpecimens of that confident ignorance, which in theſe ſubjects is the moſt prominent feature in his writings, and in expreſſions of fiery reſentment and virulent invective, carried with it, as I thought, its own confutation to unprejudiced readers of all deſcriptions: to the learned reader, by the proof which it furniſhes of the author's incompetency in the ſubject; to the unlearned, by the conſciouſneſs which the fierceneſs of his wrath betrays of a defect of argument.

2. To mention a few inſtances; it gave me great ſatisfaction to perceive, that the whole confutation of the proof, which I had built upon the epiſtle of St. Barnabas, of the orthodoxy of the firſt Hebrew Chriſtians*, was to conſiſt in an inſinuation, that "doubts had been entertained by many "learned men concerning the genuineneſs of that "epiſtle†;" and in an aſſertion of my antagoniſt's, "that it is moſt evidently interpolated; and that "the interpolations reſpect the very ſubject of which "we treat‡." The genuineneſs of the epiſtle, as a work of St. Barnabas the Apoſtle, had been expreſsly given up by me; its age being the only circumſtance of importance to my argument. For the notion that it is evidently interpolated, particularly in what reſpects the ſubject of which we treat; the evidence by which the aſſertion is ſupported, is of that ſort, which every one, who

* See Letter viii. in reply to Dr. Prieſtley.

† Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Albans, p. 7.

‡ Ibid.

engages

engages in controverſy, muſt rejoice that his adver- PART I.
ſary ſhould condeſcend to employ. Some paſſages in the Greek text, which allude to our Lord's divinity, are not found, it ſeems, in the old Latin verſion; others relating to the ſame ſubject, appear in the old Latin verſion only, and are not found in the Greek text*. That both the Greek text and Latin verſion carry evident marks of the injuries of time; that defects, ſometimes of a ſingle word, ſometimes of many words, ſometimes of whole periods, abound in both; is known to every one who hath ever looked into the work. It is doubtleſs therefore a very rational concluſion, that whatever is not found both in the original, and in the verſion, is in either an interpolation. That the hand of Time muſt always have fallen upon the correſponding paſſages in the two copies, may be taken as a ſelf-evident propoſition! If any aſſertion therefore of our Lord's divinity occur in either copy, which is not found in both; the ſuſpicion muſt be but too well founded, that ſome wicked Athanaſian hath been tampering!

3. I WAS well pleaſed to find, that the two paſſages which my antagoniſt hath produced from the Greek text, as evident inſtances of interpolation, are not among thoſe which I have cited. In theſe two paſſages the divinity of our Lord is briefly alluded to. In every one of the four, cited by me, it is diſtinctly aſſerted or ſtrongly implied: of theſe four two are found, with inconſiderable varieties, both in the Greek and in the Latin; the other two in the Latin

* Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Albans, p. 7

only.

PART I. only. But that I lay the chief ſtreſs * upon either of the two, which are in the Latin verſion only, is a meer imagination of my adverſary.

4. THE ſatisfaction, which this confutation of my argument from Barnabas afforded me, was not a little heightened, by the manner in which I am convicted of an error, in the appeal, which, in my Sixth Letter to Dr. Prieſtly, I made to the authority of Grotius, among others, in ſupport of the opinion, which I maintain, of the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes, in the article of our Lord's divinity. Dr. Prieſtley in his firſt Letters to me, ſaid, that I was ſingular in aſſerting this. To ſhew that I was not ſingular in the aſſertion (not to prove the thing aſſerted; for the proof of that I build entirely upon what is to be found in ancient writers; but to diſprove the pretended novelty of the aſſertion) I alleged the authorities of Grotius, Voſſius, Spencer and Huetius. "Having examined, ſays my antagoniſt, in the Third of his ſecond Letters, the moſt "reſpectable of theſe authorities, viz. Grotius, I find "him entirely failing you, and ſaying no ſuch thing "as you aſcribe to him †." Then, to prove that Grotius fails me, and ſays no ſuch thing as I aſcribe to him; Dr. Prieſtley produces a paſſage from Grotius, to which I never meant to allude, and which is indeed nothing to the purpoſe. But he takes no notice of the paſſage upon which my aſſertion was built, and to which the margin of my publication referred him.

* Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Albans, p. 8.

† Ibid. p. 30.

5. THE

5. THE ſatisfaction, which it gave me to find myſelf thus confuted, was ſtill increaſed, by the retractation of this confutation in my adverſary's appendix, No. III. A retractation, which in effect is little leſs than a confeſſion of the fraudulent trick, which, had not the advice of friends ſeaſonably interpoſed, it is too evident, he meant to put upon the public. I ſay upon the public; for upon me he could not think that it would paſs. Whatever may be his opinion of my learning; he has, I believe, had ſome experience of my vigilance, in watching the movements of an enemy; and he could not imagine, that the paſſage, which he produces, would paſs with myſelf, for that which I cited. But he has heard perhaps from thoſe who know me, of the conſtitutional indolence which domineers in my diſpoſition; and under this circumſtance, and the declaration which I had made of my intention to give him no reply, he thought himſelf ſecure againſt detection. PART I.

6. I MUST acknowledge another gratification, which I received from this ſame No. III. of Dr. Prieſtley's Appendix. I learnt from it, that Grotius, "when he ſpeaks of the Nazarenes as "holding the common faith of other Chriſtians, "with reſpect to Chriſt;" meant only that they held ſomething, which was *not* the common faith of other Chriſtians* And that Sulpitius Severus, when he

* "By the common faith of Chriſtians in that early age, "Grotius no doubt meant his *own opinion*, &c." Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, p. 217.

PART I. ſays that "all the Jewiſh Chriſtians till the time of "Adrian held that Chriſt was God, though they "obſerved the law of Moſes, *(Chriſtum Deum ſub "legis obſervatione credebant)* is to be conſidered as "having ſaid nothing more, than that almoſt all the "Jews of Jeruſalem were Chriſtians, though they "obſerved the law of Moſes*." Certainly the learned commentator and the hiſtorian are to be ſo underſtood. For were they to be underſtood in the plain meaning of their words, they would flatly contradict Dr. Prieſtley; which however if they had done, it would have been no great matter: for any writer, who may contradict Dr. Prieſtley, is little to be regarded.

7. DR. PRIESTLEY has been reading the Parmenides†! Having taught the Greek language ſeveral years at Warrington, he conceived himſelf well qualified to encounter that profound book. The benefit, which he has received from the performance of this knotty taſk, exactly correſponds with my notion of his abilities for the undertaking. He has found the whole treatiſe unintelligible‡! Perhaps he has 'ere this *looked through* the Enneads of Plotinus with the like emolument. He muſt therefore be well qualified to illuſtrate the hiſtory of the Platonic doctrines, in the moſt myſterious parts: and in the GREAT WORK, with which the preſs now labours, his promiſe will, I dare ſay, be fulfilled, of teaching the world many things reſpecting them, of which his

* Second Letters, p. 218. † P. 145. ‡ Ibid.

antagoniſt

antagoniſt is ignorant. He can produce hundreds of paſſages to prove, that the "divinity which the "orthodox Chriſtians aſcribed to Chriſt was the very "ſame principle which conſtituted the wiſdom and "other powers of God the Father;" and he can prove that "this was agreeable to the principles of "thoſe Platoniſts, from whom Philo and the Chriſ-"tian fathers derived their opinion ‡." That the ſecond perſon in the Platonic triad was, according to the theology of that ſchool, the *Principle of Intelligence* in the godhead, he will find indeed not difficult to prove. But unleſs he can ſhew, that this principle of Divine intelligence was not ſuppoſed, by the Platoniſts, to have had from all eternity a perſonality of its own, diſtinct from the perſonality of either of the two other principles; he will prove nothing, but what is already known to every child in Platoniſm. PART I.

8. THE GREAT WORK will probably abound in new ſpecimens of the proficiency which he has made in logic, under the tuition of the great Locke. It was not unpleaſant to me to find this great logician confounding *being*, *ſubſtance*, and *ſubſtratum* *; that is, ignorant of the diſtinctions of ὑποστασις (which ſeems to be Being in his language) ὀυσια and ὑποκειμενον: to find him unapprized of that great principle, without which a logician will handle his tools but aukwardly, that the genus cannot be pre-

‡ Second Letters, p. 124.

* Second Letters, &c. p. 138.

PART I. dicated of the ſpecific differences* (*a*); and, from an ignorance of this principle, falling into an error, into which indeed greater men than he have fallen, that Being is the univerſal *genus* under which all other *genera* rank as *ſpecies*.

9. THESE, and many other, glaring inſtances of unfiniſhed erudition, ſhallow criticiſm, weak argument, and unjuſtifiable art to cover the weakneſs, and to ſupply the want of argument; which muſt ſtrike every one who takes the trouble to *look thro'* theſe Second Letters; put me quite at eaſe with reſpect to the judgment, which the public would be apt to form between my antagoniſt and me; and confirmed me in the reſolution of making no reply to him, and of troubling the public no more upon the ſubject, except ſo far as might be neceſſary, to eſtabliſh ſome facts, which he hath ſomewhat too

* "—— The former [being] is the genus, and the lat-
" ter [perſon] the ſpecies," &c. p. 140.

(a) In the Sixth of his Third Letters, § iii. Dr. Prieſtley courageouſly encounters this principle. To prove the fallacy of it, he ſays, " According to it, ſince *men* are divided
" into *Whites* and *Blacks*, &c. &c. it would follow, that it
" cannot with propriety be ſaid of any Whites or Blacks
" that they are *men*." A more curious inſtance of logical accuracy will not eaſily be found, than this deduction. The common *genus* of White men and Black men, I take to be *Man*. The ſpecific difference between them lies in colour. Of this I apprehend manhood cannot be predicated. But how does this lead to Dr. Prieſtley's inference, that manhood is not predicable of any ſubject in which colour is found.

peremptorily

peremptorily denied; and to vindicate my character from aſperſions, which he hath too inconſiderately thrown out. PART I.

10. THE matters of fact which I mean to prove are theſe.

I. ORIGEN's want of veracity in diſputation.

II. THE exiſtence of orthodox Hebrew Chriſtians at Jeruſalem after the time of Adrian.

III. THE decline of Calviniſm, amounting almoſt to a total extinction of it, among the Engliſh diſſenters.

11. THE ſlander, which I mean to repel, is contained in my adverſary's inſinuation, that I have ſpoken with contempt of the doctrines of Calvin.

12. As for the outcry which he makes about my intolerance, and my bigotry to what he calls high-church principles, it gives me rather pleaſure than uneaſineſs. I conſider it, as the vain indignant ſtruggle of a ſtrong animal which feels itſelf overcome; the meer growling of the tyger in the toils; and I diſdain to anſwer. I glory in my principles; I am proud of the abuſe, which they may draw upon me. Nor ſhall I pretend to apologize for the ſeverity and warmth of my preſent language, or of any which I may think proper to employ in the enſuing pages. After the avowal which Dr. Prieſtley has made, in

PART I. his laſt publication*, of the ſpirit in which he has drawn his polemical ſword; it is time, that on our part alſo the *ſcabbard ſhould be thrown away.*

13. DR. PRIESTLEY's Second Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's are, at this inſtant, lying open before me, at the 53d page. My eye is attracted to a paſſage near the bottom, diſtinguiſhed by a mark, which in the firſt peruſal of the work, I had ſet againſt it in the margin; which reminds me, that it is one of thoſe, in which I was the moſt captivated with the juſtneſs of the reaſoning, and the frankneſs of the writer's declarations. Although I have already ſpent more time than, when I firſt took up my pen, I thought to do, in culling the flowers of my adverſary's compoſition; I cannot reſiſt the temptation of ſtopping (although it delay for a few moments the buſineſs to which I haſten) to pluck this delicious bloſſom, which I had well nigh overlooked, ſenſible how much it will add to the brilliancy and fragrance of my poſey.

14. BISHOP Pearſon alleges, that Ignatius in his epiſtles to Polycarp, to the Epheſians, Magneſians, and Philadelphians, refers to the doctrine of the Ebionites as an heretical doctrine. Theſe references would demoliſh Doctor Prieſtley's notion, that the Ebionites were not conſidered as heretics, ſo early as in the times of Ignatius. Dr. Prieſtley "there-

* See the Animadverſions on Dr. White's Sermons annexed to Dr. Prieſtley's diſcourſe upon the Importance of Free Inquiry, p. 78.

"fore

" fore finds no ſuch references," in theſe epiſtles, PART I.
" except perhaps two paſſages." Two clear references are juſt as good as two thouſand. How then ſhall we diſpoſe of theſe two paſſages? Very eaſily. " They may eaſily be *ſuppoſed* to have been altered." Yes. Suppoſitions are eaſily made; and for that very reaſon, they are not eaſily admitted by wary men; without ſome other recommendation than the bare eaſe of making them, joined to the conſideration of the ſervice, which a particular ſuppoſition may render to a party-writer, as a crutch for a lame argument. Upon what ground then may we build this ſuppoſition, which is ſo eaſily made, of an alteration in two paſſages in the epiſtles of Ignatius, which, as they now ſtand, contradict Dr. Prieſtley? Upon the firmeſt ground imaginable. " When " CORRECTED by an UNITARIAN, nothing " is wanting to the evident purpoſe of the writer." *Corrected by an Unitarian!* The Unitarians, if they are not ſhamefully belied by the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, have ever indeed been ready at this buſineſs of *Correction*. The Arians took the trouble to correct a treatiſe of Hilary of Poictou, in which the heretical confeſſion of the council of Ariminum was the ſubject: they corrected, and corrected, till the work became a novelty to its author. They, or the Macedonians, did the ſame good office for St. Cyprian's epiſtles; and to circulate their amended copies more widely, they ſold them at Conſtantinople at a low price. Similar liberties were taken with the works of the two Alexandrians, Clemens and

PART I. Dionyſius. They, who thus corrected, were not deficient in the kindred art of forging whole treatiſes, under the names of the brighteſt luminaries of the church, in which the holy fathers were made to ſupport heretical doctrines. The Holy Scriptures were not unattempted; as appears by the teſtimony of thoſe *, who lived at the time when the *amended* copies were extant in the world; who, in proof of the heavy accuſation, appeal to the notorious diſagreement of different copies, which had undergone the reviſion of different hereſiarchs. This is indeed the confutation of the Unitarian doctrine, that both the Primitive Fathers, and the Holy Scriptures, muſt be corrected in every page, before they can be brought to give evidence in its favour. It is becauſe the Unitarians themſelves have always underſtood this, that they have ever been ready to apply the needful *corrections*, when they thought the thing might be done without danger of detection. But the modern *Coryphæus* of the company is, I believe, the firſt who ever had the indiſcretion to avow the practice, and confeſs that he could not otherwiſe ſtand his ground, than by an appeal to the teſtimony of CORRECTED FATHERS! He is himſelf indeed a maſter of the art of correction. His attempt upon a paſſage in St. John's firſt Epiſtle, will never be forgotten †.

15. WILL he dare to recriminate? He will.— "The orthodox, he ſays, as they are commonly cal- "led, have tampered with the New Teſtament itſelf,

* See Euſeb. Ecc. Hiſt. lib. V.

† See the charge to the clergy of the archdeaconry of St. Albans, I. § 5.

"having

" having made interpolations favourable to the doc- PART I.
" trine of the Trinity, eſpecially the famous paſſage
" concerning *the three that bear record in heaven* *."
The great name of NEWTON is brought up, to give weight to the accuſation. " Newton among others has clearly proved, &c." And this he imagines, I myſelf will acknowledge. Dr. Prieſtley, even before the inditing of theſe ſecond letters, muſt have found himſelf deceived in ſo many inſtances, in his imaginations about me; how I would acknowledge, and how I would recant; how my eyes would be opened by the information which he had to give me; that I wonder he ſhould venture to imagine any more, in a ſubject in which he hath found himſelf ſo liable to error. He imagines, that I muſt acknowledge, that Newton hath clearly proved, that the record of the three in heaven in St. John's firſt epiſtle, is an interpolation made by ſome of thoſe, whom I call the orthodox.—No; I acknowledge no ſuch thing. Suppoſe I were to make the firſt part of the acknowledgement, that the paſſage is an interpolation; what conſequence would bind me to the ſecond; that the orthodox have been the wilfull falſifiers? Is it becauſe their purpoſe might have been ſerved by the pretended falſification? Truly their purpoſe had been poorly ſerved by it. It is not agreed, among the orthodox themſelves, that this text relates to the conſubſtantiality of the three perſons in the Godhead. It is my own opinion, that it does not: and this I take to be the reaſon, that it is ſo ſeldom alleged by the ancient writers in proof of the Trinity. But why muſt I ac-

* Second Letters, p. 13.

knowledge,

PART I. knowledge, that the paſſage is at all an interpolation? Becauſe Newton and others have clearly proved it. To me the proof is not clear. Were the defect of poſitive proof in favour of the paſſage much greater, than Newton and others have been able to make out; it would ſtill be with me an argument of its authenticity, that the omiſſion of it breaks the connection, and wonderfully heightens the obſcurity, of the Apoſtle's diſcourſe. Doctor Prieſtley perhaps imagines, that I hold myſelf bound to acknowledge whatever Newton hath attempted to prove. In his letters to me, and in his animadverſions upon Dr. White's celebrated diſcourſes, he is often pleaſed to boaſt of the probability * of what he knows, more than his antagoniſts: and that too in ſubjects, in which he hath been convicted of the greateſt want of knowledge. I hope I may ſay, without arrogance, that it is probable that Sir Iſaac Newton's talents in demonſtration, are as well known to me, as to Doctor Prieſtley. It is probable too, that, after the pains which I have taken to examine the principles and the authorities on which his ancient chronology is founded; I am as well qualified, as Dr. Prieſtley, to judge of his talents in other ſubjects, which are not capable of demonſtration. Now in theſe, I ſcruple not to ſay with a writer of our own times, that the great Newton went out like a common man. For the expoſition, which to complete his argument againſt the record of the three in heaven, he gives of the context of the Apoſtle's diſ-

* Second Letters, p. 135, 146, 200, 202. Animadverſions on Dr. White, p. 66, 72.

courſe;

courſe; I hold it to be a model of that ſort of paraphraſe, by which any given ſenſe may be affixed to any given words. But that even the external evidence of the authenticity of the paſſage is far leſs defective, than Newton and others have imagined; will be denied, I believe, by few, who have impartially conſidered the very able vindication of this celebrated text, which hath lately been given by Mr. Travis in his Letters to Mr. Gibbon. Dr. Prieſtley perhaps hath not found leiſure to *look through* that performance. Or, if he have, he hath formed, I ſuppoſe, "no very high opinion of the author's acquaintance with Chriſtian Antiquity*." For in this all, who oppoſe the Socinian tenets, are miſerably deficient. PART I.

16. HERE I cloſe my remarks upon my adverſary's reaſoning; and I now proceed to the proof of my own facts, and the vindication of my own character.

* See Remarks on Mr. Howes's diſcourſe.

PART

PART SECOND.

PROOFS.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Of Origen's want of Veracity.—Of the Fathers in general.—Of the paſſages in which St. Chryſoſtom is ſuppoſed to aſſert, that the Apoſtles temporiſed.—A ſpecimen of Correction *by an Unitarian.*

PART II. THE firſt fact that comes in queſtion is the want of veracity in diſputation, which I impute to Origen.

2. IN the ſecond book againſt Celſus, near the beginning of the book, Origen aſſerts of the Hebrew Chriſtians of his own times, without exception, that they had not abandoned the laws and cuſtoms of their anceſtors; and that, for that reaſon, they were called Ebionites. Dr. Prieſtley ſets a high value upon this teſtimony of Origen; as clearly eſtabliſhing his great point, that the Ebionites were nothing worſe than the Chriſtians

Chriſtians of the Circumciſion. I maintain, that if the truth of Origen's aſſertion were admitted; ſtill his teſtimony would be leſs to Dr. Prieſtley's purpoſe, than he imagines. It would prove, indeed, the Hebrew Chriſtian, and the Ebionite, to be the ſame; but it would equally prove, that the diſbelief of our Lord's divinity was no neceſſary part of the Ebionæan doctrine. But I go further. I deny the truth of Origen's aſſertion in both its branches. I deny, that it is univerſally true of the Hebrew Chriſtians, in his time, that they had not abandoned the Moſaic Law; and I deny that it is true, that they were all called Ebionites. I ſay, that Origen himſelf knew better, than to believe his own aſſertion. And I ſay that it was a part of Origen's character, not to be incapable of aſſerting, in argument, what he believed not. PART II.

3. DR. PRIESTLEY ill brooks this open attack upon the credibility of one, whom he conſiders as a principal witneſs. He defends Origen, by retorting a ſimilar accuſation upon me; and, with the utmoſt vehemence of indignant oratory, he arraigns me at the tribunal of the Public, as a falſifier of hiſtory, and a defamer of the character of the dead *. From aſſertions which I have not raſhly made, it muſt be ſomething more terrible to my feelings, than the reproaches of Dr. Prieſtley, loudly re-echoed by his whole party, that ſhall compel me to recede.

4. I ſay, then, that in the particular matter in queſtion Origen aſſerted a known falſehood. I ſay, in ge-

* Second Letters, &c. Preface p. xviii. p. 47, and 192.

neral

PART II. neral, that a ſtrict regard to truth, in diſputation, was not the virtue of his character.

5. WITH reſpect to the particular matter in queſtion; if I prove, that Origen knew the falſehood of his own aſſertion in the firſt branch of it, in which he avers, "that the Hebrew Chriſtians in his time had "not abandoned their ancient laws and cuſtoms;" no great ſtreſs, I preſume, will be laid upon the ſecond, "that they were all called Ebionites." For, according to Origen's account of the reaſon of the name (which yet I believe not to be the true one), the two branches of his aſſertion muſt ſtand or fall together.

6. IT is an inconvenience which attends controverſy, that it obliges both the writer and the reader to go frequently over the ſame ground. I muſt here repeat, what I obſerved in the ſeventh of my letters to Dr. Prieſtley, that it is in anſwer to a reproach upon the converted Jews, which Celſus had put in the mouth of an unbelieving Jew, that by embracing Chriſtianity they were deſerters of their ancient law, that Origen aſſerts, that the Jews believing in Chriſt had not renounced their judaiſm. This aſſertion is made at the beginning of Origen's ſecond book. Now, at no greater diſtance than in the third ſection of the ſame book, the good father takes quite another ground to confute his adverſary. He inſults over his adverſary's ignorance, for not making the diſtinctions, which he himſelf, in the allegation in queſtion, had confounded. "It is my preſent point, "ſays Origen, to evince Celſus's ignorance; who "has

" has made a Jew ſay to his countrymen, to Iſraelites PART II.
" believing in Chriſt; *Upon what motive have you*
" *deſerted the law of your anceſtors?* But how have
" they deſerted the law of their anceſtors, who re-
" prove thoſe that are inattentive to it, and ſay,
" *Tell me ye, &c.*?*" Then, after a citation of certain texts from St. Paul's epiſtles, in which the Apoſtle avails himſelf of the authority of the law, to inforce particular duties; which texts make nothing either for or againſt the Jew's aſſertion, that the Chriſtians of the circumciſion had abandoned their ancient law; but prove only, that the diſuſe of the law, if it was actually gone into diſuſe, could not be deemed a deſertion; becauſe it proceedednot from any diſregard to the authority of the Lawgiver: after a citation of texts to this purpoſe, Origen proceeds in this remarkable ſtrain. " And how con-
" fuſedly does Celſus's Jew ſpeak upon this ſubject?
" when he might have ſaid more plauſibly, SOME
" of you *have relinquiſhed the old cuſtoms* upon pre-
" tence of expoſitions and allegories. SOME again,
" expounding, as you call it, ſpiritually, nevertheleſs
" obſerve the inſtitutions of our anceſtors. But
" SOME, not admitting theſe expoſitions, are willing
" to receive Jeſus as the perſon foretold by the pro-
" phets, and to obſerve the law of Moſes according

* Νυν δε προκειται ελεγξαι την τε Κελσε αμαθιαν, παρ' ᾧ ὁ Ιεδαιος λεγει τοις πολιταις, και τοις Ισραηλιταις πιστευσασιν επι τον Ιησεν, το. Τι παθοντες καταλειπετε τον πατριον νομον; και τα εξης. Πως δε καταλελοιπασι τον πατριον νομον οι επιλιμωντες τοις μη ακριβειν αυτα, και λεγοντες· λεγετε μοι οι τον νομον, &c.

" TO

PART II. "to the ancient cuſtoms, as having in the letter the "whole meaning of the Spirit *." In theſe words Origin confeſſes all that I have alleged of him. He confeſſes, in contradiction to his former aſſertion, that he knew of three ſorts of Jews profeſſing Chriſtianity. One ſort adhered to the letter of the Moſaic law, rejecting all figurative interpretations: another ſort admitted a figurative interpretation, conforming, however, to the letter of the precept: but a third ſort (the firſt in Origen's enumeration) had relinquiſhed the obſervance of the literal precept, conceiving it to be of no importance in compariſon of the latent figurative meaning.

7. BUT this is not all. In the next ſentence, he gives us to underſtand, though I confeſs more indirectly, but he gives us to underſtand; that of theſe three ſorts of Hebrews profeſſing Chriſtianity, they only, who had laid aſide the uſe of the Moſaic law, were in his time conſidered as true Chriſtians. For he mentions it as a further proof of the ignorance of Celſus, pretending, as it appears he did, to deep erudition upon all ſubjects, that in his account of the hereſies of the Chriſtian Church he had omit-

* —— Και ὡς συγκεχυμενως γε ταυθ' ὁ παρα τῳ Κελσῳ Ιεδδαιος λεγει, δυναμενος πιθανωτερον - εἰπειν, ὁτι ΤΙΝΕΣ μεν ὑμων καλαλελοιπασι τα ἐθη, προφασει δικηγησεων και ἀλληγοριων· ΤΙΝΕΣ δε και δικηγεμενοι, ὡς ἐπαγγελλεσθε, πνευματικως, ἀδεν ἡττον τα παλρια τηρειτε· ΤΙΝΕΣ δε, ἀδε δικηγεμενοι, βελεσθε και τον Ιησεν παραδεξασθαι ὡς προφητευθεντα, και τον Μωυσεως νομον τηρησαι καλα τα παλρια, ὡς ἐν τῃ λεξει ἐχοντες τον παντα τε πνευματος νεν.

ted

ted *the Iſraelites believing in Jeſus, and not laying aſide, the law of their anceſtors.* "But how ſhould "Celſus, he ſays, make clear diſtinctions upon this "point; who, in the ſequel of his work, mentions "impious hereſies altogether alienated from Chriſt, "and others, which have renounced the Creator, "and hath not noticed [or knew not of] Iſraelites "believing in Jeſus and not relinquiſhing the law of "their fathers*?" What opinion is to be entertained of a writer's veracity, who, in one page, aſſerts that the Hebrews profeſſing Chriſtianity had not renounced the Jewiſh law; and, in the next affirms that a part of them had renounced it, not without an inſinuation, that they, who had not, were heretics, not true Chriſtians? EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAMSI JURATO, QUI TAM, MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON CREDITURUM ESSE CONFIRMO.

8. I FLATTER myſelf, that I have eſtabliſhed my charge againſt Origen with reſpect to the particular fact in queſtion. That a ſtrict regard to truth in diſputation was not the virtue of his character, I ſhall now ſhew by another ſtrange inſtance of prevarication, which occurs in theſe ſame books againſt Celſus. Celſus, to deprive the Chriſtian cauſe of all benefit from Iſaiah's prophecy of the Virgin's

* Αλλα γαρ ποθεν Κελσος τα καλα τον τοπον τρανωσαι, ὁς και αἱρεσεων μεν ἀθεων, και τε Ιησε παυλη ἀλλοῖριων ἐν τοις ἐξης ἐμνημονευσε, και ἀλλων καλαλειπεσων τον δημιεργον· ἀκ οἰδε δε και Ισραηλίας εἰς Ιησεν πιστευοντας και ἐ καλαλιποντας τον πατριον νομον.

A a conception,

PART II. CHAP. I.

conception, makes his Jew ſay, what hath ſince been ſaid by many Jewiſh critics without the leaſt foundation, that the Hebrew word in Iſ. vii. 14, which is rendered by the LXX, *a Virgin*, denotes only a *young woman*. Origen, in juſtification of the ſenſe in which Chriſtian interpreters underſtand the paſſage, cites * the law againſt the incontinence of betrothed virgins, in Deut. xxii. 23, 24. the word עלמה, which Chriſtians underſtand of a virgin in Iſaiah, being allowed, as Origen will have it, to denote a virgin in this paſſage of the law. But in this paſſage, according to our modern Hebrew text, the word is not עלמה, but בתולה. Were it certain that עלמה had been the reading in the copies of the age of Origen; a ſuſpicion might ariſe, that the text had been corrupted by the Jews, for the purpoſe of depriving the Chriſtians of one argument in vindidication of their interpretation of Iſaiah. But there is ſomething ſo ſuſpicious in the manner of Origen's appeal to this text; that he is rather to be ſuſpected of prevarication, than the ſynagogue of fraud.——— ἡ μεν λεξις ἡ Αλμα, ἣν οἱ μεν ἑβδομηκοντα μεθειληφασι προς την παρθενον, ἀλλοι δε εἰς την νεανιν, κεῖται, ΩΣ ΦΑΣΙ, και ἐν τῳ Δευτερονομιῳ ἐπι παρθενε, &c. "The word "עלמה which the LXX have tranſlated into the "word παρθενος [a virgin], but other interpreters, "into the word νεανις [a young woman], is put too, "AS THEY SAY, in Deuteronomy for a virgin." What is this, *As they ſay?* Was it unknown to the compiler of the Hexapla, what the reading of the

* Contra Celſ. Lib. I. § 34.

Hebrew

Hebrew text, in his own time, was? If he knew that it was, what he would have it thought to be; why does he ſeem to aſſert upon hearſay only? If he knew not; why did he not inform himſelf? that he might either aſſert, with confidence, what he had found upon enquiry to be true; or not aſſert what could not be maintained. EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAMSI JURATO, QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON CREDITURUM ESSE CONFIRMO.

9. So much for Origen's veracity in argument, ſo unjuſtly aſperſed by me, ſo compleatly vindicated by Dr. Prieſtley *.

10. I WILL here take the liberty to remark upon the early fathers in general, whoſe memories are nevertheleſs to be revered, for their learning and the general ſanctity of their characters; that in their popular diſcourſes, and, in argument, they were too apt to ſacrifice ſomewhat of the accuracy of fact to the plauſibility of their rhetoric: or, which is much the ſame thing, they were too ready to adopt any notion, which might ſerve a preſent purpoſe, without nicely examining its ſolidity or its remote conſequences. For this reaſon the great profit, which

* "I have completely vindicated the character of Origen, "which you have endeavoured to blot." Second Letters, &c. p. 189. See a further Defence of Origen's veracity in the Firſt of Dr. Prieſtley's Third Letters, and my Reply to that further defence in the Fifth of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions.

may arife from the ſtudy of their works, is rather that we may gather from them, what were the opinions and the practice of the whole body of the Church, in the times wherein they lived; than that any one of theſe writers is ſafely to be followed in all his aſſertions. Inſtances of precipitation, in advancing what occurred at the moment, and ſerved a preſent purpoſe, may be found, I believe, in the writings of no leſs a man than St. Chryſoſtom. I ſhall mention one inſtance which occurs to me, which is very remarkable, though perhaps of little conſequence. In his homilies upon the ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians, Chryſoſtom relates that it was not agreed, in his time, who the perſon might be, who, is deſcribed by St. Paul as the "brother whoſe praiſe "is in the goſpel in all the churches:" that ſome thought St. Luke was meant under this deſcription; others St. Barnabas: and, for a reaſon which he mentions, he gives it as his own opinion, that St. Barnabas was probably the perſon intended. But, in his firſt homily upon the Acts of the Apoſtles, he no leſs than three times brings up this text as an atteſtation of St. Paul to St. Luke's merit: for no other reaſon, but that this application of it ſerved the purpoſe of a rhetorical amplification of St. Luke's praiſe.

11. UPON this circumſtance, the notorious careleſſneſs of the fathers in their rhetorical aſſertions, I ſhould build my reply to the ſeveral paſſages which Dr. Prieſtley hath produced from St. Chryſoſtom, to

to prove that it was allowed by St. Chryſoſtom, that the doctrine of the Trinity had never been openly taught by the Apoſtles; if thoſe paſſages appeared to me, in the ſame light in which they appear to my antagoniſt. As for the particular paſſage in Athanaſius, if any Unitarian, who reads the entire paſſage, thinks that the Jews there mentioned were converted, not unbelieving, Jews; I muſt apply to him, what Dr. Prieſtley remarks of thoſe whom I eſteem as orthodox, that "the minds of a few individuals may be "ſo locked up, that no keys we can apply will be "able to open them*." For St. Chryſoſtom, I cannot find that he ſays any thing, but what I myſelf would ſay; that the Apoſtles taught firſt what was eaſieſt to be learned, and went on to higher points, as the minds of their catechumens became able to bear them. If I could allow that he hath any where ſaid, what Dr. Prieſtley thinks he finds in his expreſſions, that the Apoſtles had been reſerved and concealed upon an article of faith; I ſhould ſay, that it was a thought that had haſtily occurred to him, as a plauſible ſolution of a difficulty, which deſerved, perhaps, no very diligent diſcuſſion in a popular aſſembly; and that he had haſtily let it eſcape him. I am well perſuaded, that any prieſt in Chryſoſtom's juriſdiction, who ſhould have maintained this extraordinary propoſition, that "the "Apoſtles had temporized in delivering the funda-"mentals of the Chriſtian faith," would have met with no very gentle treatment from the pious Arch-

* Importance of free enquiry, p. 59.

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biſhop of Conſtantinople. Had the prieſt, in his own vindication, preſumed to ſay; "Holy Father, "if I am in error, you yourſelf muſt anſwer for it. "Upon your authority I adopted the opinion, which "you now condemn; you have repeatedly ſaid in "your commentaries, upon the ſacred books, that "the Apoſtles and the Evangeliſts ſtood in awe of "the prejudices of their hearers:" St. Chryſoſtom would have replied; "Faithleſs monſter! is it thy "ſtupidity, or thy baſeneſs, that interprets, as an "impeachment of the ſincerity of the firſt inſpired "preachers, my encomium of their wiſdom? But "why ſhould I wonder, that he ſhould not ſcruple "to ſlander his biſhop, who ſpares not the Apoſtles "and Evangeliſts." Had the prieſt been able to prove againſt St. Chryſoſtom, that he had indeed given countenance in his writings to ſuch an error; the good father would have repented in ſackcloth and aſhes.

12. As the mention of Dr. Prieſtley's quotations from St. Chryſoſtom hath occurred; I muſt not omit to do juſtice to a paſſage, which hath ſuffered a little in the hands of this *emeritus* profeſſor of Greek* in the late academy at Warrington. I

* "I ——— taught it nine years, the laſt ſix of them at "Warrington." Second Letters, p. 202.

Ad ſummum, non Maurus erat, nec Sarmata, nec Thrax,
Qui ſumpſit pennas, *mediis ſed natus Athenis.*

But "the elements of the language, it ſeems, were not "taught there." [Ibid.] The profeſſor indeed, had the elements been to be taught, had been ill qualified for his chair.

ſpeak

ſpeak of the paſſage cited by Dr. Prieſtley, in his Second Letters, p. 94, from the firſt homily on the epiſtle to the Hebrews. In the Greek, as Dr. Prieſtley gives it, it is rank nonſenſe; and not very intelligible, in Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh. Dr. Prieſtley, to get it into Engliſh at all, has had recourſe to an emendation. An "ὁ muſt be turned into καὶ, "*or ſomething elſe.*" Suppoſe ὁ turned into καὶ; what will be the antecedent of the pronoun ἀὐτος in the Greek, or of *himſelf* in Dr. Prieſtley's Engliſh? Had Dr. Prieſtley conſulted any good edition of St. Chryſoſtom, either the Paris edition of 1735, or the old Paris edition of Fronto Ducæus, or the Eton edition; he would have found that ὁ γαρ ἐιπεν ὁ θεος ſhould be ὁ γαρ ἐιπεν ὁ Χριστος; and that ὁ ſhould keep its place. "Obſerve (ſays St. Chryſoſtom) "the Apoſtle's prudence in the choice of his ex-"preſſions. For he hath not ſaid, *Chriſt ſpake*, al-"though he [i. e. Chriſt] was the perſon who ſpake: "but becauſe their minds were weak, and they were "not yet able to bear the things concerning Chriſt, "he ſays, *God ſpake by him.*"

13. THE particular notion that Chriſt was the Jehovah of the Old Teſtament, the perſon who converſed with the Patriarchs, talked with Moſes in the buſh, diſplayed his tremendous glory at Sinai, and ſpake by the prophets; is what St. Chryſoſtom thought the Hebrews not far enough advanced in the theory of revelation to bear. If he thought them too weak, to bear the general doctrine of our

PART II. CHAP. I.

Lord's DEITY; his judgement would be of little weight, ſince St. Paul thought otherwiſe. For, in the ſecond verſe of the firſt chapter of this epiſtle, the Apoſtle enters upon that abſtruſe ſubject, which, in the firſt verſe, according to Dr. Prieſtley's interpretation of St. Chryſoſtom, he is ſuppoſed to ſhun; in the third verſe, he goes deep into the myſtery; and, in the eighth, he applies to Chriſt what the Pſalmiſt ſays of God, that " his throne is for ever " and ever, the ſcepter of his kingdom a ſcepter of " righteouſneſs:" and the manner, in which the words of the Pſalmiſt are introduced, ſhews that the Apoſtle thought, that they, to whom he wrote, could not but join with him in this application. Dr. Prieſtley, I ſuppoſe, thought it as well to keep it out of the reader's ſight, that St. Chryſoſtom, in this very paſſage, ſpeaks of Chriſt as the Jehovah of the Old Teſtament. He thought it beſt to keep the true meaning of the paſſage out of ſight; and for this reaſon he choſe to take up the corrupt and ſenſeleſs reading of the Heidelberg edition (a bad copy of the Veroneſe text, in a very ſmall part only collated with the Palatin and Auguſtan MSS.) and rejecting an emendation unanimouſly received by later editors, who took the pains to rectify the text by a laborious collation of many MSS. to make the beſt of the paſſage for himſelf, by *correcting* in the wrong place. Thus indeed we have a beautiful ſpecimen of an ancient father *corrected by an Unitarian!*

14. I MUST not quit the ſubject of theſe quotations, without obſerving, that the Learned Reader, in

in this firſt homily of St. Chryſoſtom upon the epiſtle to the Hebrews, will find St. Chryſoſtom's own confutation of the proof, which Dr. Prieſtley attempts to bring from his works; that it was a thing known and admitted in his time, that the Apoſtles had been ſilent upon the ſubject of our Lord's divinity; and that the orthodox, to account for this acknowledged fact, were reduced to the neceſſity of ſuppoſing that they temporized. What the ſilence of the Apoſtles, upon this ſubject, was; may be learned from the epiſtle to the Hebrews. What St. Chryſoſtom's opinion of their temporizing caution was; may be learned from his firſt homily upon that epiſtle. Whoever reads only the two firſt ſections of that homily, will perceive, that the prudence, which St. Chryſoſtom aſcribes to the Apoſtles, was a prudence in the manner of preaching myſterious doctrines, not a diſhoneſt caution in diſſembling difficulties. Had he aſcribed to them any ſuch baſe art; the epiſtle to the Hebrews had been his confutation. His firſt homily on that epiſtle is the confutation of thoſe, who, in ignorance, or in art, would aſcribe to him ſo unworthy a notion of the founders of our faith.

CHAP.

CHAPTER SECOND.

Of the Church of Ælia, or Jeruſalem, after Adrian. —Moſheim's Narration confirmed.—Chriſtians not included in Adrian's Edicts againſt the Jews.—The return from Pella, a fact affirmed by Epiphanius.— Orthodox Hebrew Chriſtians exiſting in the World long after the times of Adrian.

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THE next fact that comes in queſtion, is the exiſtence of a body of orthodox Hebrew Chriſtians at Jeruſalem, after the final diſperſion of the Jews by Adrian.

2. IN the ſeventh of my letters to Dr. Prieſtley, I ſtated briefly, what I take to be the true account of the changes, which took place in the eccleſiaſtical ſtate of Paleſtine upon the baniſhment of the Jews by Adrian. The eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of thoſe times is ſo very general and imperfect; that whoever attempts to make out a conſiſtent ſtory from the ancient writers, which are come down to us, will find himſelf under a neceſſity of helping out their broken accounts by his own conjectures. In the general view of the tranſactions of that time, I agree almoſt entirely with Moſheim; who, in my judgement, hath, with great penetration, drawn forth the whole truth; or what muſt ſeem to us the truth, becauſe it carries the higheſt air of probability; from the obſcure hints, which the hiſtorian Sulpitius furniſhes, connected with other hints, which, though unobſerved by Dr. Prieſtley,

Prieſtley, are to be found in other writers of antiquity. Dr. Prieſtley ſpeaks of a ſeries of facts *, and of many circumſtances, which, he ſays, I have added to Moſheim's account, and "muſt know that I added." If Dr. Prieſtley conſulted that part of Moſheim's work, *De Rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum*, to which the margin of my letters referred him (but in Moſheim, as in Grotius, it is likely that he turned to the wrong place): if he opened Moſheim in the place to which I referred; he muſt know that I have added no circumſtance, to Moſheim's account; but ſuch as every one muſt add, in his own imagination, who admits Moſheim's repreſentation of the fact in its principal parts. He muſt know, that three circumſtances in particular, which he is pleaſed to mention among my additions, are affirmed by Moſheim: the conflux of Hebrew Chriſtians to Ælia; the motive, which induced the majority to give up their ancient cuſtoms; namely the deſire of ſharing in the privileges of the Ælian colony; and the retreat of thoſe, who could not bring themſelves to give their ancient cuſtoms up, to remote corners of the country †. Theſe were Moſheim's aſſertions before they were mine: and Dr. Prieſtley either knows this; or, pretending to ſeparate Moſheim's own account from my additions, he hath not taken the trouble to examine what is mine, and what is Moſheim's.

3. IT may ſeem, however, that to convict my adverſary of the crime of ſhameful precipitance, in aſſerting what he hath not taken the pains to know; or of

* Second Letters, &c. p. 192. † Ib. p. 39.

the

the worſe crime of aſſerting the contrary of what he knows; abſolves not me of the imputation, that I have related upon the authority of Moſheim, what Moſheim related upon none *. I will therefore briefly ſtate the principles, which determine me to abide by Moſheim's account of the tranſactions in queſtion. I take for granted, then, theſe things.

I. A Church of Hebrew Chriſtians, adhering to the obſervance of the Moſaic Law, ſubſiſted for a time at Jeruſalem, and for ſome time at Pella, from the beginning of Chriſtianity until the final diſperſion of the Jews by Adrian.

II. UPON this event, a Chriſtian church aroſe at Ælia.

III. THE Church of Ælia, often, but improperly, called the Church of Jeruſalem, for Jeruſalem was no more; the Church of Ælia in its external form, that is, in its doctrines and its diſcipline, was a Greek church; and it was governed by Biſhops of the uncircumciſion. In this my adverſary and I are agreed. The point in diſpute between us is, of what members the Church of Ælia was compoſed. He ſays, of converts of Gentile extraction. I ſay, of Hebrews: of the very ſame perſons, in the greater part, who were members of the ancient Hebrew church, at the time when the Jews were ſubdued by Adrian. For again, I take for granted,

* Second Letters, &c. p. 192.

IV. THAT

IV. THAT the obſervation of the Moſaic law, in the primitive church of Jeruſalem, was a matter of meer habit and national prejudice, not of conſcience. A matter of conſcience it could not be; becauſe the decree of the apoſtolical college, and the writings of St. Paul, muſt have put every true believer's conſcience at eaſe upon the ſubject. St. Paul, in all his epiſtles, maintains the total inſignificance of the Moſaic law, either for Jew or Gentile, after Chriſt had made the great atonement; and the notion that St. Paul could be miſtaken, in a point which is the principal ſubject of a great part of his writings, is an impiety, which I cannot impute to our holy brethren, the ſaints of the primitive church of Jeruſalem *. Again, I take for granted,

V. THAT with good Chriſtians, ſuch as I believe the Chriſtians of the primitive church of Jeruſalem to have been; motives of worldly intereſt, which would not overcome conſcience, would, nevertheleſs, overcome meer habit.

VI. THAT the deſire of partaking in the privileges of the Ælian colony, from which Jews were excluded, would accordingly be a motive, that would prevail with the Hebrew Chriſtians of Jeruſalem, and other parts of Paleſtine, to diveſt themſelves of the form of Judaiſm, by laying aſide their ancient cuſtoms.

* By the primitive church of Jeruſalem, I mean the Hebrew Church before Adrian. The retreat to Pella was temporary; and, I am inclined to think, of ſhort duration; and the Biſhop, while he ſat there, was ſtill called the Biſhop of Jeruſalem.

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4. DR. PRIESTLEY asks me, "Where, Sir, do "you find in this passage [a passage of Sulpitius Seve-"rus which he cites] any promise of immunities to "the Jewish Christians, if they would forsake the law "of their fathers*." Nowhere, I confess, in this passage; nor in any other passage of Sulpitius; nor in any passage of any antient, I may add, nor of any modern writer. But the question implies a false and fraudulent representation of my argument. I never spake, I never dreamed, of any promise of *particular* immunities to Jewish Christians, upon condition that they renounced the Mosaic law. I spake only of the general immunities of the Ælian colony, of which Christians might, and Jews might not partake†.

* Second Letters, &c. p. 42.

† Notwithstanding the explanation, which I have here given, of what I said, in the Seventh of my Letters in Reply, of the exclusion of Jews, and of Jews only, from the privileges of the Ælian colony; Dr. Priestley in his Third Letters, has the assurance to tell me, "You say that the Jews were al-"lowed to remain in the place and enjoy the privileges of the "Ælian colony, *on condition* of their becoming Christians." As if I had mentioned this as an article of capitulation between the Emperor and the Jews. I conceive, that I have expressed my meaning too plainly to be misapprehended, by those who choose to understand. I never conceived, I have no where said, "that Adrian was so well disposed to Christi-"anity, as to permit the rebellious Jews to remain in Jerusa-"lem on condition of their embracing it." But I suppose that the Emperor might distinguish between rebels and those who had been good subjects. The Hebrew Christians had taken no part in the rebellion. And yet, had they not discarded the Jewish rites, they might have been mistaken for Jews.

5. Dr.

5. DR. PRIESTLEY alleges, that "the hiſtorian "[Sulpitius] ſays, that the object of Adrian was to "overturn Chriſtianity*." But whatever the emperor's diſlike to Chriſtianity might be, there is little probability that, upon this occaſion, he would be diſpoſed to treat Chriſtians with ſeverity. The hiſtorian Sulpitius nowhere ſays, that the emperor's edicts againſt the Jews extended to Chriſtians; and the hiſtorian Oroſius ſays expreſsly, that to Chriſtians they extended not†. Was Oroſius too late a writer to give evidence about theſe tranſactions? The hiſtorian of Corruptions is, I believe, ſome centuries later. His means of information therefore are fewer; and, were he well informed, his precipitance in aſſertion, and his talent of accommodating his ſtory to his opinions, ſhould annihilate the credit of his evidence. The teſtimony of Oroſius, however inconſiderable, might of itſelf therefore outweigh the opinion of Dr. Prieſtley; if a feather only, in the one ſcale, be more than a counterpoiſe for a nothing in the other.

6. THE teſtimony, however, of Oroſius is not without ſome indirect confirmation from other writers; and, what is more, from its conſiſtency with other circumſtances in the hiſtory of thoſe times; with which the aſſertion of Sulpitius, that Adrian meant to wound Chriſtianity through the ſides of Judaiſm, will not eaſily accord. It is a notorious fact, that

* Second Letters, &c. p. 42.

† ——— præcepitque ne cui Judæo introeundi Hieroſolymam eſſet licentia, Chriſtianis tantum civitate permiſſâ. Oroſ. Hiſt. lib. 7, cap. xiii.

Adrian

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Adrian was not unfavourable to the Chriſtians. The Church, in his reign, obtained a reſpite from perſecution. The fury of its perſecutors was reſtrained by the imperial reſcripts to the provincial governors: who were directed not to proceed againſt the Chriſtians, except by way of regular trial upon the allegation of ſome certain crime: and when nothing more was alleged than the bare name of Chriſtianity, to puniſh the informer as a ſycophant. A reſcript to this effect addreſſed to Minucius Fundanus, proconſul of Aſia, is preſerved by Juſtin Martyr in his firſt apology; and, after Juſtin, by Euſebius in his hiſtory*.[a] This equitable diſpoſition of the emperor towards the Chriſtians, is aſcribed by Euſebius to the eloquent apologies of Quadratus and Ariſtides, and to the remonſtrances of Serenius Granianus, the predeceſſor of Fundanus in the Aſiatic proconſulate†. When the Jewiſh war broke out; reaſons of ſtate immediately took place, which would greatly heighten the effect of any impreſſions, previouſly made upon the emperor's mind by the pleadings of the Chriſtian Apologiſts, and the interceſſions of what friends they might have among his

* Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. IV. c. 8 & 9.

[a] Dr. Prieſtley in the Second of his Third Letters contends that theſe reſcripts meant nothing more, than that no one ſhould be puniſhed as a Chriſtian, 'till he was proved to be ſuch. But this had been no indulgence; for every Chriſtian might have been proved to be a Chriſtian by his own confeſſion. The writers of the times boaſt of theſe reſcripts as indulgences.

† Hiſt. Eccl. Lib. IV. c. 3. & in Chron. ad ann. MMCXLII.

courtiers

courtiers. The Chriſtians of Paleſtine refuſed to take any part in the Jewiſh rebellion; and they ſmarted under the reſentment of Barchochebas, the leader of the inſurgents. The earlieſt teſtimony now extant of this fact is, I believe, that of Euſebius in his chronicle *. But the known impiety of Barchochebas, which renders it incredible that the Chriſtians ſhould inliſt under his banners, ſufficiently avouches the truth of the chronologer's aſſertion. The thing therefore in itſelf is highly probable, that the emperor ſhould make the diſtinction which, Oroſius ſays, he made between the ſeditious Jews and the harmleſs Chriſtians; who had, indeed, been ſufferers by their loyalty. The probability is ſtill increaſed by certain circumſtances mentioned by hiſtorians, which indicate a particular antipathy in the imperial court, at this time, to the rites of Judaiſm; which the refractory manners of the Jews might naturally excite. Spartian ſays, that a prohibition of circumciſion was one of the pretences of the Jewiſh rebellion †. Modeſtinus the lawyer, as he is cited by Caſaubon, alleges a reſcript of Antoninus granting a permiſſion to the Jews, to circumciſe their own children. This reſcript of permiſſion, as it plainly implies, that the practice had been forbidden by ſome preceding emperor; in ſome meaſure confirms Spartian's relation. All theſe circumſtances put together, create, as the thing appears to me, the higheſt probability of the truth of Oroſius's aſſertion; that Chriſtians were not included in the edicts of Adrian, by which the Jews

* Ad annum MMCXLIX.

† Movebant eâ tempeſtate & Judæi bellum, quòd vetabantur mutilare genitalia. *Spartian in Adriano.*

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were baniſhed from Jeruſalem. And although no author that I know of, beſide Oroſius, expreſsly mentions the diſtinction; the contrary, that the Chriſtians were included, is affirmed by no ancient writer. The diſtinction indeed, though not mentioned, is clearly implied in Epiphanius's aſſertion; that the Hebrew Chriſtians, after Adrian's ſettlement of the Ælian colony, returned from Pella, whither they had retired from the diſtreſſes of the war, to Ælia. For it happens, that this fact, of which Dr. Prieſtley does me the honour to make me the the inventor, is aſſerted by Epiphanius. Epiphanius, having related that Aquila, the ſame perſon who afterwards made a tranſlation of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament into Greek, was employed by Adrian as overſeer of the works at Ælia; proceeds in theſe words: ὁ τοινυν Ακυλας, διαγων ἐν τῃ Ιερυσαλημ, καὶ ὁρων τὰς μαθήσεις των μαθήτων των ἀποστολων ἀνθενλας τῃ πιστει, και σημεια μεγαλα ἐργαζομενας ἰασεων και ἀλλων θαυμαλων· ἠσαν γαρ ΥΠΟΣΤΡΕΨΑΝΤΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΠΕΛΑΗΣ της δεκαπολεως εις Ιερυσαλημ, και διδασκονλες· ἡνικα γαρ ἐμελλεν ἡ πολις ἁλισκεσθαι ὑπο των Ρωμαιων, προεχρηματίσθησαν ὑπο ἀγγελκ παινες οἱ μαθήται μεταστηναι ἀπο της πολεως, μελλεσης ἁρδην ἀπολλυσθαι· ὁιτινες και μετανασαι γενομενοι ὠκησαν ἐν Πελλῃ τῃ προγεγραμμενῃ πολει περαν τκ Ιορδανε, ἥτις ἐκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται εἰναι· μετα δὲ την ἐρημωσιν Ιερυσαλημ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΡΕΨΑΝΤΕΣ, ὡς ἐφην, σημεια μεγαλα ἐπετελεν· ὁ τοινυν Ακυλας, κ. τ. λ. Epiph. *De Pond & Menſ.* Whether this return of the Chriſtians of Jeruſalem from Pella took place in the interval between the end of Titus's war and the commencement of Adrian's, or after the end

end of Adrian's, is a matter of no importance. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe, that theſe returned Chriſtians were reſiding at Jeruſalem, or more properly at Ælia, at the ſame time that Aquila was reſiding there as overſeer of the emperor's works. Let not the public therefore be abuſed by any cavils, which ignorance or fraud may raiſe, about the chronology of the return *. To this aſſertion of Epiphanius, Moſheim, relating the fact, refers. Relating the ſame

* Dr. Prieſtley in the Third of his Third Letters, has treated this teſtimony of Epiphanius juſt as I expected and indeed predicted. He firſt endeavours to embarraſs the argument with ſome chronological difficulties; and then gets rid of it in his own peculiar manner, by making poſitive teſtimony ſubmit to his own theory. "What can be more "evident, he ſays, than that the return of the Jewiſh Chriſ-"tians from Pella, mentioned in this paſſage by Epiphanius, "is that return which followed the deſtruction of Jeruſalem "by Titus?" Be it ſo. It is granted then that ſome of the Jewiſh Chriſtians, who fled to Pella during Titus's war, returned to Jeruſalem afterwards. But the queſtion is, not at what time the Jewiſh Chriſtians, whom Aquila found at Ælia, had returned thither, but at what time he converſed with them. Epiphanius ſays he converſed with them at the time that he was ſuperintendant of Adrian's works at Ælia. At that time therefore there were Hebrew Chriſtians ſettled at Ælia, or they could not then have converſed with Aquila. I maintain, that there is no reaſon to believe that the Hebrew Chriſtians quietly ſettled at Ælia, before the Jewiſh rebellion, were included in Adrian's edict for the baniſhment of the Jews.

But Dr. Prieſtley remarks further upon the authority of Cave, that Aquila's tranſlation of the Old Teſtament was

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ſame fact, to Moſheim I referred *: to the very paſſage †, where Dr. Prieſtly, had he known what it is to examine authorities before he pronounces upon

made in the 11th or 12th year of Adrian. Then, ſince that tranſlation was undertaken in conſequence of his apoſtacy, and his apoſtacy was ſome conſiderable time after his converſion, Dr. Prieſtley infers that his converſion "was probably prior to the reign of Adrian," and ſo the whole ſtory of his intercourſe with the Jewiſh Chriſtians at Ælia, while he was reſiding there in the time of Adrian, is diſcredited.

Perhaps to aſſign the exact year of Aquila's tranſlation would prove a taſk of no leſs difficulty to any who ſhould attempt it, than to determine the day of the week, and the hour of the day, when the laſt word of that work was written. The learned Cave had, as far as I know, no reaſon for fixing Aquila's tranſlation to the 11th or 12th of Adrian; but that Epiphanius ſays, that in the 12th year of Adrian, "Aquila firſt became known." But if Epiphanius is to be believed, Aquila firſt became known by Adrian's appointment of him to ſo conſiderable an office, as that of overſeer of the public works at Ælia. This was in the 12th year of Adrian. His converſion to Chriſtianity was ſome time ſubſequent to that appointment: his apoſtacy, at ſome conſiderable diſtance of time, ſubſequent to his converſion: and his tranſlation of the Old Teſtament ſubſequent to his apoſtacy. So that the time of that tranſlation, can be no otherwiſe defined than thus; that it certainly was not earlier than the 12th of Adrian, and probably was later by an interval of many years.

My argument therefore from Epiphanius ſtands its ground, and the caution which I gave the public not to be abuſed by cavils which might be raiſed about the Chronology of the return from Pella, is but too much juſtified by the event.

* Letters to Dr. Prieſtley, p. 61.

† De Rebus Chriſtianorum ante Conſtantinum. Sæc. II. § 38. not. *

them,

them, might have found the reference to the original author. The confidence with which he mentions this as a fact forged by me, is only one inſtance, out of a great number, of his own ſhameleſs intrepidity in aſſertion.

7. BUT to return from the detection of Dr. Prieſtley's fictions to the hiſtorical diſcuſſion. It may ſeem, that my ſix poſitions go no further, than to account for the diſuſe of the Moſaic Law, among the Chriſtians of Paleſtine, upon the ſuppoſition that the thing took place; and that they amount not to a proof, that a church of Hebrew Chriſtians, not adhering to the rites of Judaiſm, actually exiſted at Ælia. To complete the proof therefore, I might appeal to Epiphanius's aſſertion of the return of the Chriſtians of Jeruſalem from Pella. But I will rather derive the proof, from a fact which I think more convincing than the teſtimony of Epiphanius; a fact, by which that teſtimony is itſelf indeed confirmed. I affirm then,

VII. THAT a body of orthodox Chriſtians of the Hebrews were actually exiſting in the world, much later than in the time of Adrian.

8. THE teſtimony of Origen I hold too cheap, to avail myſelf of his triple diviſion of the Hebrew Chriſtians, to prove the exiſtence of the orthodox ſet in his time. It muſt be obſerved, however; that, were his evidence at all admiſſible, his diſtinction would be ſomewhat a ſtronger proof for me; than his general

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aſſertion, of which the generality is diſcredited by the diſtinction afterwards alleged, can be allowed to be for my antagoniſt. But I give him Origen. I will reſt the credit of my ſeventh poſition, upon the mention which occurs in St. Jerom's commentary upon Iſaiah, of Hebrews believing in Chriſt as diſtinct from the Nazarenes. St. Jerom relates two different expoſitions of the prophecy concerning Zabulon and Naphtali, delivered in the beginning of the ninth chapter of Iſaiah; of which expoſitions he aſcribes the one to the *Hebrews believing in Chriſt*; the other, to the *Nazarenes*. The character given of theſe Hebrews, that "they believed in Chriſt," without any thing to diſtinguiſh their belief from the common belief of the church, without any note of its error or imperfection, is a plain character of compleat orthodoxy. For it was neither the diſpoſition of St. Jerom, nor the faſhion of his age, to miſs any opportunity of proclaiming the vices of thoſe, who were deemed heretics; unleſs upon occaſions when ſome rhetorical purpoſe might be anſwered by concealing them. But no rhetorical purpoſe was to be anſwered, in theſe notes upon Iſaiah, by a concealment of any error, that had been juſtly to be imputed to theſe Hebrews; nor was St. Jerom at all concerned to maintain the particular expoſition, which he aſcribes to them. He had therefore no inducement to conceal their errors. But he taxes them with none. He had therefore no harm to ſay of them. They were orthodox believers: and the diſtinction of them from the Nazarenes, made by St. Jerom, is a plain proof that they were not obſervers of the Moſaic law. For although the Moſaic law was obſerved in the orthodox church

church of Jeruſalem, until the time of the ſuppreſſion of the Jewiſh rebellion by Adrian; it was after his time, by my adverſary's own confeſſion, confined to the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. If then the Hebrews believing in Chriſt obſerved not the Moſaic law in the time of St. Jerom: ſince the Moſaic law had been obſerved by the firſt race of believing Hebrews; it follows, that the practice of the Hebrew congregations had undergone a change, at ſome time before the age of St. Jerom. Dr. Prieſtley ſays, that great bodies of men change not their opinions ſoon. I ſay, they never change their old cuſtoms and inveterate habits, but from ſome powerful motive. Now in what period of the hiſtory of the church ſhall we find a poſture of affairs, ſo likely to induce the Hebrew Chriſtians to forſake the Moſaic law, as that which obtained in Paleſtine upon the final diſperſion of the Jews by Adrian? If the orthodox Chriſtians of the Hebrews, actually exiſting ſomewhere in the world from the reign of Adrian to the days of St. Jerom, were not members of the church of Ælia, dwelling at Ælia, and in the adjacent parts of Paleſtine; Dr. Prieſtley, if he be ſo pleaſed, may ſeek their ſettlement. It is no ſmall difficulty upon my adverſary's ſide, that he can neither tell "what became of the Chriſtian Jews," upon his ſuppoſition, that with the unbelieving Jews they "were driven out of Jeruſalem by Adrian*;" nor from what quarter the Greek church of Ælia was furniſhed with its members.

* "What became of the Chriſtian Jews who were driven "out of Jeruſalem by Adrian, does not appear." Second Letters, &c. p. 45.

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9. UPON theſe foundations, which a ſtronger arm than Dr. Prieſtley's ſhall not be able to tear up, ſtands "the church of orthodox Jewiſh Chriſtians at Jeru-"ſalem*:" To which the aſſertors of the catholic faith will not ſcruple to appeal, in proof of the antiquity of their doctrine, whatever offence the very mention of the orthodox church of Jeruſalem may give to the enraged Hereſiarch†.

10. HE aſks me, what evidence I can bring that this church, even before the time of Adrian, was Trinitarian. I brought evidence in my letters‡, which he hath not been able to refute. Upon his own principles, the acknowledgement of their orthodoxy in later times, by writers who would have acknowledged no orthodoxy of any Unitarian ſect, might be a ſufficient evidence of their earlieſt orthodoxy. The evidence which I have brought, is nothing leſs than an atteſtation of a member of this earlieſt Hebrew church to the belief of himſelf, and his Hebrew brethren, in our Lord's divinity. But "*If* "they were Nazarenes, ſays Dr. Prieſtley, Epipha-"nius repreſents them as Unitarian when John "wrote§." I have ſaid, and I will never ceaſe to ſay, that Epiphanius's repreſentation juſtifies no ſuch opi-

* "Thus ends this church of orthodox Jewiſh Chriſtians "at Jeruſalem, &c." Second Letters, p. 44.

† "— *I hope, (id populus curat ſcilicet)* I hope, however, "we ſhall hear no more of them as an evidence of the anti-"quity of the Trinitarian doctrine." Second Letters, p. 45.

‡ See particularly Letter VIII.

§ Second Letters, p. 45.

nion.

nion. But what is Epiphanius's account of the Nazarenes, or what is any account of the Nazarenes, to the purpoſe; *if* the Hebrews of the church of Jeruſalem were no Nazarenes? With St. Jerom, the Hebrews believing in Chriſt, and the Nazarenes, are different people.

N. B. Dr. Prieſtley's objections to the evidence brought from St. Jerom in proof of my VIIth poſition, which he hath advanced in the Fourth of his Third Letters, are anſwered in the Sixth of the Supplemental Diſquiſitions.

CHAP.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Of the Hebrew Church and its Sects.

PART II. CHAP. III.

IT muſt ſtrike the learned reader, that the Nazarenes mentioned by St. Jerom, in the paſſage to which I now refer of his annotations on Iſaiah, muſt have been a different people from thoſe mentioned by him with ſuch contempt in his epiſtle to St. Auſtin, and deſcribed by Epiphanius. The Nazarenes, here mentioned by St. Jerom, held the Scribes and Phariſees in deteſtation; their traditions in contempt; and the Apoſtle St. Paul in high veneration *. And yet theſe Nazarenes, of the beſt ſort, were ſtill a diſtinct ſet of people from the Hebrews believing in Chriſt; that is, from the orthodox church of Jeruſalem, diveſted, in conſequence of Adrian's edicts againſt the Jews, of what, until the time of thoſe edicts, it had retained of the exterior form of Judaiſm. Theſe remarks lead, I think, to a more diſtinct notion of the different ſects of Hebrews profeſſing the Chriſtian religion, than I have met with in writers of eccleſiaſtical antiquity; a much more diſtinct one, I confeſs, than I had myſelf formed, when I delivered the Charge to the Clergy of my Archdeaconry, which gave the be-

* See Jerom in Iſ. IX. 1, 2, 3, et VIII. 14, 19—22.

ginning

ginning to this controverſy; a notion however perfectly conſiſtent with every thing, which I then maintained; and tending to eſtabliſh the points, in which I differ from Dr. Prieſtley. As the queſtion about the Hebrew ſects is of great importance, I ſhall here briefly ſtate the ſum of what I have found concerning them in ancient writers, and then propound my own concluſions.

2. THE Nazarenes are not mentioned by IRENÆUS. Irenæus ſays of the Ebionites *, that they acknowledged God for the maker of the world;—that they reſembled not Cerinthus or Carpocrates in their opinions about Chriſt;—that they uſed only the Goſpel by St. Matthew;—were over curious in the expoſition of the prophets;—diſowned the Apoſtle Paul, calling him an apoſtate from the law;—circumciſed, and retained the Jewiſh law and Jewiſh cuſtoms. This deſcription of the Ebionites occurs in that part of the great work of Irenæus, which is extant only in a barbarous Latin tranſlation. In the paſſage which relates to their opinions about Chriſt, Cotelerius ſuſpects a corruption; and for *non ſimiliter* he would read *conſimiliter*; ſuppoſing that Irenæus muſt have affirmed, and that he could not deny, their reſemblance of Cerinthus and Carpocrates in that article; and this indeed is agreeable, as will appear, to the deſcriptions given of the Ebionites by other writers.

* Irenæus, lib. i. cap. XXVI.

3. IRENÆUS

3. IRENÆUS in another place inſinuates, that for wine, in the Euchariſt, the Ebionites ſubſtituted pure water*.

4. TERTULLIAN ſays, that Ebion made Jeſus a meer man, of the ſeed of David only, that is, not alſo the Son of God; in ſome reſpect higher in glory than the prophets†. In another place‡ he ſays, that Ebion was the ſucceſſor of Cerinthus; not agreeing with him in every particular, inaſmuch as he allowed that the world was made by God, not by angels: that as a conſequence of Chriſt's meer humanity, he maintained the laſting obligation of the Moſaic law; becauſe it is written, that the diſciple is not above the maſter, nor the ſervant above his Lord. Tertullian ſays nothing expreſsly about the agreement, or diſagreement, of Ebion and Cerinthus, in their notions of Chriſt; but the impiety of maintaining that he was a meer man, the ſon of Joſeph, he aſcribes to Carpocrates and Cerinthus as well as Ebion; which renders the emendation, propoſed by Cotelerius, in the Latin verſion of Irenæus, *conſimiliter* for *non ſimiliter*, very probable: eſpecially as a further agreement of the Ebionites and Gnoſtics, in their notions about Chriſt, is maintained by other writers. Tertullian again in another place, having mentioned "that St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, inveighs againſt the obſervers and defenders of circumciſion and the law,"

* Irenæus, lib. 5, c. II. † De carne Chriſti. c. XIV.
‡ De Præſcript. Hæret. c. XLVIII.

adds,

adds, " this was Ebion's herefy *." This however is no argument, that Ebion lived when that epiſtle was written. Tertullian means only to remark, that Ebion's tenets, in this article, were clearly confuted by St. Paul's writings. In the ſame place he mentions the denial of the reſurrection of the body, by Marcion, Apelles, and Valentinus, as an error reproved in St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians. But no one, I imagine, would thence conclude that Marcion, Apelles, and Valentinus, were contemporaries of the Apoſtle.

5. ORIGEN, in the ſecond book againſt Celſus, ſeems to comprehend the whole body of the Hebrew Chriſtians under the name of Ebionites; and affirms, that they adhered to the law of their fathers †. But in another place, where he profeſſes to deſcribe the Chriſtianity of the Hebrews with the greateſt accuracy, he divides the whole body into three ſects. The firſt, like other Chriſtians, entirely diſcarded the Moſaic law: the ſecond retained the obſervation of the law in the letter of the precept; admitting however the ſame ſpiritual expoſitions of it, which were ſet up by thoſe who diſcarded it: the third ſort not only obſerved the law according to the letter, but rejected all ſpiritual expoſitions of it ‡.

* De præſcript. Hæret. cap. XXXIII.

† Contra Celſ. lib. II. § 1.

‡ Con. Celſ. lib. II. § 3.

6. EUSEBIUS

PART II. CHAP. III.

6. EUSEBIUS divides the Ebionites into two ſorts, both denying our Lord's divinity; but the better ſort believing the miraculous conception*. Both rejected the epiſtles of St. Paul, whom they called an apoſtate from the law. They uſed the *Goſpel according to the Hebrews*, and held the canonical goſpels in little eſteem. They kept both the Jewiſh Sabbath and the Chriſtian Sunday. Origen and Euſebius, like Irenæus, mention not the Nazarenes by name.

7. ST. JEROM, in his commentary upon Iſaiah, mentions Hebrews believing in Chriſt†; and, as a diſtinct ſet of people from theſe believing Hebrews, he mentions Nazarenes who obſerved the law‡, but deſpiſed the traditions of the Phariſees, thought highly of St. Paul‖, and held the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. For, by an expoſition of If. viii. 13, 14, which St. Jerom aſcribes to them, it appears that they acknowledged in Chriſt the צבאות יהוה [the Lord God of hoſts] of the Old Teſtament. In his epiſtle to St. Auguſtin§, St. Jerom deſcribes Nazarenes of another ſort, "who believed "in Chriſt the ſon of God born of the virgin Mary, "in whom the orthodox believe;" but were, nevertheleſs, ſo bigotted to the Moſaic law, that they were rather to be conſidered as a Jewiſh ſect, than a Chriſtian. In the ſame place, he ſpeaks of the

* Hiſt. Ecc. lib. III. c. 27. † In If. ix. 1, 2, 3.
‡ In If. ibid. & viii. 14 & 19—21. ‖ Ibid.
§ Hieron. Op. Tom. II. f. 341. A. edit. Froben.

Ebionites

Ebionites as a ſect anathematized for their Judaiſm, and falſely pretending to be Chriſtians; and in his commentary upon St. Matthew xii. he ſays they acknowledged not St. Paul's apoſtolical commiſſion.

8. EPIPHANIUS deſcribes the ſect of the Nazarenes as a ſet of people hardly to be diſtinguiſhed from Jews. He expreſſes a doubt, whether they acknowledged our Lord's divinity: but the terms, in which his doubt is expreſſed, argue that it was groundleſs*. He deſcribes the Ebionites as reſembling the Samaritans, rather than the Jews;—as maintaining that Jeſus was the ſon of Mary by her huſband;—that the Chriſt, deſcending from heaven in the figure of a dove, entered into Jeſus at his baptiſm. He ſays, that the Nazarenes and the Ebionites had each a Hebrew goſpel (the only one which they received), which they called the goſpel by St. Matthew;—that the copies received by the two ſects were different: compared with the true goſpel by St. Matthew, which the church receives, the Ebionæan copy was the leaſt entire, and the moſt corrupt. He ſpeaks of the Ebionites as a ſect, which branched off from the Nazarenes, and appeared not till after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem †.

9. FROM the teſtimony of an ancient writer, cited by Euſebius, it appears, that one Theodotus, a native of Byzantium, a tanner by trade, at the very end

* Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, I. § 10, 11.

† Epiph. Hær. 30.

of

of the ſecond century, was the firſt who taught the meer humanity of Chriſt*. He preached at Rome. His doctrine was an extenſion of the impiety of the firſt Ebionites: for, with them, the humanity of Chriſt was over at his baptiſm†. He was then deified; or, at leaſt, exalted above humanity, by the illapſe of the Chriſt.

10. Now, from all this, I ſeem to gather, that, after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the Hebrew church, if under that name we may comprehend the ſects which ſeparated from it, was divided into five different ſets of people.

I. St. JEROM's Hebrews believing in Chriſt. Theſe were orthodox Chriſtians of Hebrew extraction, who had laid aſide the uſe of the Moſaic law. They are the ſame with the firſt ſet in Origen's threefold diviſion of the Hebrew Chriſtians.

II. NAZARENES of the better ſort, orthodox in their creed, though retaining the uſe of the Moſaic law. As they were admirers of St. Paul, they could not eſteem the law generally neceſſary to ſalvation. If theſe people were at all heretical; I ſhould gueſs that it was in this ſingle point, that they received the goſpel of the Nazarenes inſtead of the canonical goſpels.

* Hiſt. Ecc. lib. V. c. 28.

† See more upon this point in Mr. Howes's ſermon.

III. NAZARENES

III. NAZARENES of a worſe ſort, bigotted to the Jewiſh law, but ſtill orthodox, for any thing that appears to the contrary, in their creed. Theſe were the proper Nazarenes, deſcribed under that name by Epiphanius, and by St. Jerom in his epiſtle to St. Auſtin. Theſe two ſects, the better and the worſe ſort of Nazarenes, make the middle ſet in Origen's threefold diviſion.

IV. EBIONITES denying our Lord's divinity, but admitting the fact of the miraculous conception.

V. EBIONITES of a worſe ſort, denying the miraculous conception, but ſtill maintaining an union of Jeſus with a divine being, which commenced upon his baptiſm. Theſe two ſects, the better and the worſe ſort of Ebionites, make the laſt ſet in Origen's threefold diviſion.

11. THUS we find a regular, and no unnatural, gradation; from the orthodox Hebrew Chriſtian to the blaſpheming Ebionite. It appears, however, that the impious degradation of the Redeemer's nature, though it took its riſe among the Hebrew ſects, was not carried to its height among them. A ſect of proper Unitarians, holding the perpetual undeified humanity of the Saviour, made its firſt appearance at Rome, and boaſted for its founder Theodotus, the apoſtate tanner of Byzantium: if, indeed, it was not the growth of ſtill later times; which ſeems to be the opinion of the learned Mr. Howes, to whoſe judgement I am inclined to pay great regard. Theſe two points, how-

ever, ſeem certain; that the Nazarenes, even of the beſt ſort, were a different people from the Hebrew brethren of the orthodox church of Jeruſalem: and that the Nazarenes, even of the worſt ſort, were believers in the divinity of our Lord. In what extent they believed it, may, perhaps, ſeem to ſome a queſtion in ſome degree ſtill open to diſcuſſion. At preſent, I ſee no reaſon to recede from the opinion, which, with great authorities upon my ſide, I have hitherto maintained, of their entire orthodoxy upon that article. If, upon that particular point, I ſhould, at any time hereafter, ſee cauſe to think myſelf miſtaken; my conviction is not likely to come from Dr. Prieſtley, but from a very different quarter. Mr. Howes's 9th number is juſt fallen into my hands. That learned writer, I perceive, thinks that it was but a ſubordinate divinity, which the Nazarenes acknowledged in our Lord. For his opinion I feel all the deference, which one ſcholar owes to the ſentiments of another; but not without the ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions, I confeſs, at preſent in favour of my own.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Of the Decline of Calviniſm.—Of Conventicles.

I NOW paſs to the third fact, which I have taken upon me to eſtabliſh; the decline of Calviniſm, amounting almoſt to a total extinction of it, among our Engliſh Diſſenters; who, no long time ſince, were generally Calviniſts.

2. THIS fact is of no great importance in our controverſy; as it is but very remotely connected with the queſtion about the opinions of the firſt ages. The rapid decline of Calviniſm, here in England, was alleged by me as an inſtance, in which Dr. Prieſtley's *theorem* about the rate of velocity, with which the opinions of great bodies of men change, would lead, in the practical application of it, to very erroneous concluſions. If my inſtance was ill-choſen; it will not immediately be a conſequence, that Dr. Prieſtley's theorem is a ſafe principle for the reformation of the hiſtory of the primitive church, in defiance of the teſtimony of the earlieſt writers extant. It would give me great pleaſure to find myſelf in an error with reſpect to this fact; and to ſee reaſon to believe Dr. Prieſtley, in his aſſertion, that the great body of our Diſſenters at this day are Calviniſts. So many Calviniſts as are among them, ſo many friends there are to the catholic

faith in all its eſſential branches; for the peculiarities of Calviniſm affect not the eſſentials of Chriſtianity. But I am ſorry to ſay, that I muſt ſtill believe, that the genuine Calviniſts among our modern Diſſenters are very few; unleſs, in a matter, which hath ſo lately fallen under the cogniſance of the Britiſh legiſlature, I could allow Dr. Prieſtley's aſſertion, to outweigh the plain teſtimony of facts of public notoriety.

3. If the great body of the Diſſenters are, at this day, Calviniſts; upon what pretence was it, that the diſſenting miniſters, who, in the years 1772 and 1773, petitioned Parliament to be releaſed from the ſubſcriptions to which they were held by the 1ſt of William and Mary, arrogated to themſelves the title of the General Body of diſſenting miniſters of the three denominations in and about London? No true Calviniſt could concur in that petition. For although I cannot admit, that the articles of our church, in the doctrinal part, affirm the ſtrict tenets of Calviniſm; yet they are in this part, what, as I conceive, no true Calviniſt would ſcruple to ſubſcribe; and, with reſpect to the great doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Juſtification, and Grace; every genuine Calviniſt would ſtart at the very thought of being ſuppoſed, even tacitly to concur in a requeſt to be releaſed from a confeſſion of his faith: for none better underſtands than the genuine Calviniſt, the force of that ſacred maxim, "with the heart man believeth "unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion "is made unto ſalvation." Would Dr. Prieſtley inſinuate,

nuate, that his brethren of the rational diſſent approached the auguſt aſſembly of the Britiſh Parliament, with a petition founded upon falſe pretenſions? Will he ſay, that they were, in fact, the minority of the body, of which they called themſelves the generality? Will he ſay, that the Thirteen *, who in the meeting of the General Body at the Library, in Red-croſs Street, on Wedneſday December the 23d, 1772, divided againſt the vote for an application to Parliament to remove the reſtraints, which the wiſdom of our forefathers, by the Act of Toleration, had impoſed; were the repreſentatives of a more numerous body, than the Fifty-five who gave their ſuffrages for the motion †: who, at a ſubſequent meeting, ſuffered not the proteſt of the thirteen orthodox miniſters, to be recorded in the Minutes of the buſineſs of the day; and with difficulty permitted their reaſons to be redde‡. A proceeding, by the way, which clearly ſhews, how cordially theſe pretended friends of general toleration would delight, were they in power, to tolerate opinions which might differ from their own; and evinces the propriety of the prayer, which a ſenſe of ſuch wrongs, drew from a member of the orthodox minority, "From the power of ſuch pretenders to ſu-" perior reaſon may GOD and THE BRITISH GO-

* See a pamphlet entitled, *A Collection of the ſeveral Papers relating to the Application made to Parliament, in* 1772 *and* 1773, *by ſome of the Proteſtant Diſſenters, for Relief in the matter of Subſcription, &c. London, Printed for J. Wilkie, N° 71, St. Paul's Church-Yard.* MDCCLXXIII.

† See Wilkie's Collection, N° III.

‡ See Wilkie's Collection, N° II.

" VERNMENT ever defend the orthodox Diſſenters*." Theſe thirteen ſpake only the ſentiments of every Calviniſt, when they ſaid, " We believe the doctrines " of the articles to be both true and important. We " dare not therefore conſent, to be held up to view as " thoſe, who indulge any doubts reſpecting their " truth, or at all heſitate about their importance. " We conſider them as the baſis of our hope, the " ſource of our comfort, and the moſt powerful in- " centive to a courſe of ſincere, ſtedfaſt, chearful, " obedience †." It were injuſtice to theſe worthy men, to let any occaſion paſs of mentioning their names with the reverence which is due to them. David Muire, John Rogers, Thomas Towle, Samuel Brewer, Edward Hitchin, Thomas Oſwald, John Potts, John Trotter, John Macgowan, George Stephens, Joſeph Popplewell, Henry Hunter, John Kello; theſe were the venerable Confeſſors, who, on the 23d of December, 1772, and on the 27th of January in the following year, in meetings of the General Body of the three denominations, ſtood *for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*. " They thought " themſelves bound, they ſaid, to contend earneſtly " for it againſt all who ſhould oppoſe it." For this purpoſe they formed, as I gather from the documents of the times ‡, into a diſtinct aſſociation. When the

* See *Candid Thoughts on the late Application of ſome Proteſtant diſſenting Miniſters, &c. By an Orthodox Diſſenter. London, Printed for W. Goldſmith, N°. 20, Paternoſter-Row, 1772.*

† See Wilkie's Collection, N° II. § 3.

‡ See Wilkie's Collection, N° III. and IV.

petition

petition of the Rationaliſts was laid before the Parliament, they were firm and active in their oppoſition to it; conſidering the requeſt as little leſs than a blow craftily aimed at the very vitals of the Reformed religion, and of Chriſtianity, indeed, itſelf. They preſented a croſs petition*, ſigned, as they themſelves ſaid, by the Miniſters as well as the Laity of the moſt reſpectable congregations of real Proteſtant Diſſenters in town and country. But, when they wiſhed to give credit and authority to their oppoſition, by boaſting of their numbers: the moſt that they could ſay of the number of miniſters, who had ſigned the croſs petition was this; that they were "upwards of Fifty." The number of diſſenting miniſters in the whole kingdom was reckoned at that time to be about 2000. Of which 50 is juſt the fortieth part. When Dr. Prieſtley therefore affirms, that the "majority of the diſſenting miniſters are ſtill Calviniſts," he muſt be underſtood to uſe the ſame rhetorical figure, by which, in the Poſtſcript of his firſt Letters to me, he ſwelled a few periods of Clemens Alexandrinus to the ſize of a whole book. By a computation formed upon that inſtance, I concluded the proportion of the Prieſtleian to the vulgar *Whole* to be that of 1 to 48: from this new inſtance it turns out ſomewhat larger.

4. THUS, from the evidence of public facts, I have the mortification to find Dr. Prieſtley's ſentiments confuted, and my own confirmed, concerning the preſent ſtate of Calviniſm among the Engliſh Diſſen-

* See Wilkie's Collection, N° V.

ters. And however it may now ſerve Dr. Prieſtley's purpoſe; to magnify the numbers of the Calviniſts; his Rational brethren in the year 1772 ſpoke of their own majority in terms which implied, that the Calviniſts were, in their judgement, a very inconſiderable part of the whole body of the Diſſenters. "It is admitted," ſay the Rationaliſts, in the *Caſe of the Proteſtant diſſenting Miniſters and Schoolmaſters*, "that "the greater part of the diſſenting miniſters have not "complied, and cannot in conſcience comply with "the ſubſcription required by the Act of Toleration. "The diſſenting miniſters in general are conſequently "liable to the penalties abovementioned." After ſtating the relief which they deſired to obtain, they allege that the "generality of Proteſtant diſſenting miniſters, "together with their people, are happily united in the "object of the preſent application *." The petitioning Diſſenters it ſeems in the year 1772 thought the Calviniſts ſo few and inconſiderable; that the miniſters, who could not in conſcience comply with the 1ſt of William and Mary, and were happily united in the object of the application at that time made to Parliament, ſeemed to them the generality of Proteſtant diſſenting Miniſters. Theſe gentlemen knew, it is to be preſumed, the ſtate of the diſſent. They meant not to impoſe a lie upon the three eſtates of the Britiſh legiſlature. For *they were all, all honourable men!* If then my notion of the decline of Calviniſm is erroneous, Dr. Prieſtley will at leaſt confeſs, that I am countenanced and ſupported, in my error, by a very reſpectable authority.

* See Wilkie's Collection, N° I.

5. I am

5. I am not ignorant indeed, that this authority was treated with little reſpect by the proteſting Calviniſts; who allowed no ſuperiority of numbers on the ſide of the Rationaliſts *. It was pretended that many Calviniſts concurred in the petition; ſome in meer tenderneſs for ſcrupulous conſciences; many more upon that goodly principle, the ſource of all that orderly ſubmiſſion to the higher powers, which hath ever been ſo conſpicuous in the Puritans of this country, that even a true faith is not to be confeſſed at the requiſition of the magiſtrate. I bear that good will to Calviniſm, that it gives me real concern to remember, that it hath ever been diſgraced by a connection with ſuch a principle. I am inclined however to believe, that the Calviniſts, who, upon puritanical principles, concurred in the petition of the Rationaliſts, in the year 1772, were very few; and that the orthodox Diſſenters were deceived, in the idea, which they had formed, of the numbers of their own party. The requiſition of the magiſtrate is now removed; and no pretence exiſts for a Puritanical reſerve. I would aſk then, what is now the ſtate of the Diſſenting miniſtry? Are they at this time a majority, are they any conſiderable part, of the diſſenting miniſters, who have qualified under the 1ſt of William and Mary? Every diſſenting miniſter hath now the alternative of qualifying, either by ſubſcribing the doctrinal articles; or by a declaration, which, by the 19th of his preſent Majeſty, is accepted inſtead of ſubſcription. But the Calviniſt, even of the puritanical caſt, holds himſelf

* See "Candid Thoughts, &c. by an Orthodox Diſſenter," ſect. II.

bound

bound to an open declaration of his faith; except in that extraordinary case, when the interference of the magistrate makes it a duty, to disown his usurped authority, by refusing to confess with the mouth, what the heart believes. Every true Calvinist therefore will now qualify under the old Act of Toleration. And if they are but an inconsiderable part of the dissenting ministry, who have qualified in this manner; it is but too plain that Calvinism among the dissenters is almost extinguished. Inconsiderable, however, as I fear their numbers are, the Calvinists, for the soundness of their faith, are the most respectable part of our modern Dissenters: and though few, in comparison with the general mixed body of the Rationalists, I hope they are more numerous than the proper Unitarians.

6. So much for the principal facts which I engaged to establish. It may, perhaps, be expected, that I should take some notice of another, in which I have been charged with misrepresentation. Dr. Priestley, in his first letters to me, expressed high resentment, at the use which I had made in my Charge of the word *Conventicle*; as descriptive of meetings in which he, and friends of his, preside. To inform myself how far this resentment might be well-founded, and for no other purpose, I searched the registers of certain courts for such an entry of the house in Essex-Street, and for a record of such declarations on the part of the minister, as, by the 19th of his present majesty, are requisite to make a meeting, upon the pretence of Divine Worship, not a conventicle in the strict sense of the word. I told Dr. Priestley, that I had found neither

entry

entry of the houſe, nor record of the miniſter's declaration. Dr. Prieſtley replies, that I could, indeed, find no record of declaration; for none was ever made: but that I ought to have found an entry of the houſe; for the entry was duly made. Now the truth is, that I employed the clerks at the different offices to make the ſearch, for which I paid the accuſtomed fee. I truſted to their report, which I find was not accurate. I believe the fact to be, as Dr. Prieſtley ſtates it. The houſe is entered; but the miniſter hath never declared his principles, as the law requires. The defence of a ſtrong word, which hath been taken perſonally, would be to me the moſt unpleaſant part of the controverſy, were it not that the ſtyle of Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, and of ſome other publications upon that ſide, hath put an end to all ceremony between me and the leaders of the Unitarian party. I therefore ſtill inſiſt, that all meetings under miniſters who have not declared, whether the place of meeting be entered or be not entered, are illegal; and that the word *Conventicle*, as it was uſed by me in my Charge, was not miſapplied*.

N. B. THE

* Dr. Prieſtley in his Third Letters inſiſts that his own meeting-houſe, and Mr. Lindſey's, cannot be brought under the denomination of *Conventicles* merely becauſe they, who preach in them, are not authoriſed by Law. He thinks, "that "if, by any accident an unauthoriſed diſſenting Miniſter, like "himſelf, ſhould preach in *a pariſh church*, it would not on "that account become *a conventicle*." But whatever he may think, an aſſembly in a pariſh church to hear Dr. Prieſtley preach, or even to aſſiſt at Divine Worſhip performed by a Prieſt

PART II. CHAP. IV.

N. B. THE preceding Chapter gave occaſion to a Pamphlet, entitled, *The Calviniſm of the Proteſtant Diſſenters aſſerted: in a Letter to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's.* By Samuel Palmer, *Paſtor of the Independent Congregation at Hackney.* London, Printed for *J. Buckland, &c.* 1786.

The ſum of Mr. Palmer's argument is contained, I think, in theſe three propoſitions. That of the thirteen Miniſters who ſigned the proteſt againſt the reſolution for the application to Parliament, Six were Scots-men, true members of the Kirk, and therefore not properly among our Engliſh Diſſenters. That the croſs petition was not preſented by the thirteen; that the fifty who ſigned it were chiefly Lay-preachers, not belonging to the body of the London miniſters; Methodiſts; unacquainted with the fundamental principles of the Proteſtant Diſſenters. That a great body of Calviniſts concurred in the application to Parliament upon a general principle of Liberty, diſliking any interference of the Magiſtrate in religious matters.

Of theſe three propoſitions, the two firſt ſeem to militate ſtrongly on my ſide, heightening the appearance at leaſt of a paucity of Calviniſts among our Diſſenters: ſince ſix of the thirteen who proteſted, and

Prieſt of the Church of England, otherwiſe than according to the form preſcribed by the Book of Common Prayer, would be a *Conventicle*; and all perſons reſorting to it would be liable to the penalties, which the Laws denounce againſt perſons frequenting Conventicles.

all

all the fifty who petitioned, according to Mr. Palmer, were not Engliſh Diſſenters. As for the third, if the fact be as Mr. Palmer ſtates it, I can only lament that a republican principle ſhould ſo ſtrongly have infected ſo reſpectable a branch of the Chriſtian Church, as the Calviniſts are in my eſtimation. I believe however that the truth is, and is pretty notorious, that Calviniſm is gone among the Diſſenters of the preſent times; tho', for what reaſon I preſume not to ſay, the diſſenting Teachers diſlike to be told of its extinction.

CHAP.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Of the Doctrines of Calvin.—Of Methodists.

PART II. CHAP. V.

I NOW proceed to reply to Dr. Prieſtley's inſinuation, that I have ſpoken with contempt of the doctrines of Calvin, which at the ſame time he preſumes, I really believe*. He was in good humour with me, when he drew up this concluding paragraph of his third letter: for his reaſon for preſuming that I believe what, he imagines, I ſpeak of with contempt, is, that he is unwilling "to tax me with inſincerity †."

2. IF any where I ſeem to ſpeak with contempt of the doctrines of Calvin, I have certainly been unfortunate in the choice of my expreſſions. It is one thing not to aſſent to doctrines in their full extent; quite another to deſpiſe them. I am very ſenſible that our articles affirm certain things, which we hold in common with the Calviniſts: ſo they affirm many things which we hold in common with the Lutherans; and ſome things which we hold in common with the Romaniſts. It cannot well be otherwiſe; for as there are certain principles which are common to all Proteſtants, ſo the eſſential articles of faith are common to all Chriſtians. Perhaps, in points of meer doctrine the language of our articles agrees more nearly with the Calviniſtic, than with

* Second Letters, &c. p. 35. † Ibid.

any

any other Proteſtant confeſſion, except the Lutheran. But I never was aware, till Dr. Prieſtley informed me of it, that I am obliged, by my ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles, to believe *every* tenet that is generally known by the name of Calviniſtic*: and, till the obligation is inforced upon me by ſome higher authority than his; I ſhall, in theſe matters, "ſtand "faſt in my liberty." Nevertheleſs, I hold the memory of Calvin in high veneration; his works have a place in my library; and in the ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures, he is one of the commentators whom I frequently conſult. I may appeal to my own congregation at Newington and to other congregations to which, by my ſituation, I am occaſionally called to preach, to witneſs for me, that I never mention the Calviniſtic divines without reſpect; even when I expreſs, what I often expreſs, a diſſent, upon particular points, to their opinions. The reſpect with which they are mentioned in my Good-friday ſermon, in which I aſſerted the doctrines of Providence on the one hand, and of Free-agency on the other, is, perhaps, in Dr. Prieſtley's own recollection. In the paſſage to which he alludes, in my ſeventh letter to himſelf, he will find no contempt expreſſed of Calviniſts, or of their opinions. The ſeverity of the reflection falls on thoſe, who have ſo ſpeedily deſerted a doctrine to which, for a long time, they were not without bigotry attached; while they not only maintained Calvin's tenets without exception, but ſeemed to think there could be no orthodoxy

* Second Letters, &c. p. 35.

out

out of Calviniſm. I conſider it as the reproach of the Diſſenters of the preſent day, that a genuine Calviniſt is hardly to be found; except in a ſect, conſpicuous only for the encouragement, which the leaders of it ſeem to give to a diſorderly fanaticiſm. The rational Diſſenter hath nothing in common with the Calviniſt, except it be an enmity to the epiſcopal eſtabliſhment of this country; and this he hath not ſo much in common with the Calviniſtic churches, as with his own anceſtors the factious Puritans.

3. It was, perhaps, an omiſſion, that when the ſcarcity of Calviniſts among the Engliſh Diſſenters was mentioned, a diſtinct exception was not made in favour of natives of Scotland, formed into Calviniſtic congregations, under reſpectable paſtors of their own country and of the true Calviniſtic perſuaſion, here in London, and perhaps in other parts of England. But I conſider theſe as no part of our Engliſh Diſſenters. They are members of another national eſtabliſhment; who, reſiding here, may think that a conformity with the church of England might be interpreted as a deſertion of their own communion. The rational diſſenter may take no credit to himſelf, for their adherence to their old principles; nor are they involved in the reproach of his degeneracy.

4. While I thus repel my adverſary's ſlanderous inſinuation, of contempt expreſſed by me of Calvin's doctrines; the reflection, I doubt not, is ariſing in his breaſt, and with much ſecret ſatisfaction he

he ſays within himſelf, "He is making his peace, I "ſee with the Calviniſts; but how will he get over "my remark, upon the diſreſpectful language in "which he has ſpoken of the Methodiſts? his bro-"ther churchmen*!" To the burthen of that crime my ſhoulders, I truſt, are not unequal. What if I frame my reply in terms, which Dr. Prieſtley's late publication furniſhes: That whenever occaſions ſhall ariſe, which may make it my duty, as a miniſter of the goſpel, to declare my ſentiments; I ſhall not wait for Dr. Prieſtley's leave, to "expreſs my con-"tempt of what I think to be deſpicable, and my "abhorrence of what I think to be ſhocking†." The Methodiſt, I am ſenſible, profeſſes much zeal for our common faith. Many of his follies, I am willing to believe, proceed more from an unhappy peculiarity of temperament, than from any thing amiſs in the moral diſpoſitions of his heart. Let him then renounce his fanatical attachment to ſelf-conſtituted uncommiſſioned teachers; let him ſhew his faith by his works; not the formal works of ſuperſtition and hypocriſy, but the true works of everlaſting righteouſneſs; the works of Fair-dealing, Charity, and Continence: let him do this, and churchmen will turn to him, and call him brother.

* See ſecond Letters, &c. p. 35.

† Importance of free enquiry, p. 29.

CHAP.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Of the general Spirit of Dr. Prieſtley's Controverſial Writings.—Concluſion.

PART II. CHAP. VI.

I HAVE replied more largely than I thought to do, to more than is deſerving of reply in Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters. But, as the controverſy between him and the advocates of the catholic faith, is now brought, by his own declarations, to a ſtate reſembling that of a war, in which no quarter is to be given, or accepted; I think myſelf at liberty to ſtrike at my enemy, without remorſe, in whatever quarter I may perceive an opening; and I think myſelf called upon, by the preſent ſituation of the controverſy, not to ſuppreſs the remarks, which have ſpontaneouſly ariſen in my own mind upon the peruſal of his late writings. I fear he is too little redde but by his own party; and it is fit that it ſhould be generally known, what ſpirit he is of.

2. HE avows, indeed, with the greateſt frankneſs, that the great object of his eſſays upon theological ſubjects, is to ſpread opinions among his country-men, from the preſs, and from his pulpit, which he flatters himſelf muſt end in the total demolition of the polity of his country in the eccleſiaſtical branch; the only branch, againſt which he thinks it prudent, as yet, to declare his antipathy. In his *View of the Principles and Conduct of the Proteſtant Diſſenters, with reſpect to the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*

Conſtitution of England, a pamphlet firſt publiſhed in the year 1769, after a picture, highly exaggerated I hope, of certain abuſes among the clergy; which he refers to the principles of our hierarchy, but which, ſo far as they are real, are eaſily traced to very different cauſes; he, in the true ſpirit of patriotiſm, points out the remedy. His ſalutary advice is conveyed in the form of a prediction. He foretells, that in "ſome general convulſion of the ſtate," ſuch as he might hope our diſputes with the American colonies, which were then viſibly tending to an open rupture, might, in no long time, produce; "ſome "bold hand, ſecretly impelled by a vengeful provi- "dence, ſhall ſweep down the whole together*." In later publications he diſcovers no averſion, to be himſelf the hand employed in that vindictive buſineſs; although his indiſcretion, which he avows, and which ſeems indeed to be very great, when the glorious proſpect of ſtate convulſions warms and elevates his patriotic mind, ſhould render him, it may be thought, unfit to have a part in the execution of any project, in which the ſucceſs may at all depend on ſecrecy. In the dedication of his late *Hiſtory of Corruptions* to Mr. Lindſey, he tells his friend (what might be fitting for an aſſociate's ear, but it is a ſtrange thing to be mentioned in public) "that while the attention of men in power is en- "groſſed by the difficulties, which more immediately "preſs upon them; the endeavours of the friends "of reformation [that is, of thoſe concealed inſtru-

* View of the principles, &c. p. 12.

" ments of vengeance on their devoted country], " their endeavours in points of doctrine pass with " *less notice* and operate *without obstruction* *." In his last publication he has thrown out many acute remarks upon the efficacy of "small changes in the " political state of things, to overturn the best com- " pacted establishments †:" upon the certainty, with which the exertions of himself and his associates operate to the ruin of the ecclesiastical constitution: upon the violence, with which causes, that lie dormant for a time, at last act. "We, he says, are, " as it were, laying *gun-powder* grain by grain under " the old building of error and superstition, which " a single spark may hereafter inflame, so as to pro- " duce an instantaneous explosion ‡." He shews, with great ability, that all measures of government, to support the ecclesiastical constitution, will be of no avail, if once a great majority of the people can be made its enemies ‖. And, for this good purpose, he declaims in his *conventicle* to "enlighten the minds " and excite the zeal §" of the mechanics of the populous town of Birmingham, with respect to the doctrines in dispute between himself and the assertors of that faith, which the Church of England holds in common with the first Christians. The avowal of these sentiments in himself, of hostility to the political constitution of his country; the attempt, to

* Dedication of History of Corruptions, p. vii.

† Importance of free enquiry, p. 39. ‡ Ibid. p. 40.

‖ Importance of free enquiry, p. 41.—44.

§ Ibid. p. 29.

excite

excite ſimilar ſentiments, in the breaſts of the "com- "moneſt people," in whoſe breaſts they cannot be expected to lie inactive, quietly expecting the event of literary diſcuſſion; ſuch avowal, and ſuch attempts are more, I ſhould think, than can be juſtified by the right of private judgement upon ſpeculative queſtions. Not that I would inſinuate that they, in any degree, deſerve the attention of our governors; for I am well perſuaded that neither his doctrine, nor his principles, are gaining that ground among the people, which he ſeems to imagine. I am inclined indeed to think, that the advancement even of his Unitarian doctrine is but ſlow, except in his own head; in which it ſeems to be making haſty ſtrides. In his good wiſhes to the conſtitution, I think better of many of his Unitarian friends, than to believe that they concur with him. And while Trade and Manufactures flouriſh at Birmingham; we may ſafely truſt to the inducements, which every man there will find to mind his own buſineſs, to defeat the ſucceſs of Dr. Prieſtley's endeavours to "enlighten and ex- "cite." It ſeems therefore unneceſſary at preſent to think of "raiſing the dam or of making it ſtronger." It will be the better policy of government, to let the brawling torrent paſs. The attempt to provoke ſeverities by audacious language, in order to raiſe a cry of perſecution, if ſedition, making religion its pretence, ſhould meet with a premature check from the ſecular power, is a ſtale trick, by which the world is grown too wiſe to be taken in. If Dr. Prieſtley ever ſhould attempt to execute the ſmalleſt part, of what he would now be underſtood to threaten; it

may then indeed be expedient, that the magiſtrate ſhould ſhew, that he beareth not the ſword in vain. But whatever Dr. Prieſtley may affect to think of the intolerance of Churchmen in general, and of the Archdeacon of St. Alban's in particular; a Churchman lives not in the preſent age ſo weak, who would not in policy, if not in love, diſcourage, rather than promote, any thing that might be called a perſecution of the Unitarian blaſphemy, in the perſon of Dr. Prieſtley, or of any of his admirers. A Churchman lives not ſo weak as not to know, that perſecution is the hot-bed, in which nonſenſe and impiety have ever thrived. It is ſo friendly to the growth of religion, that it nouriſhes even the noxious weeds, which carry but a reſemblance of the true plant in the external form. Let us truſt, therefore, for the preſent, as we ſecurely may, to the trade of the good town of Birmingham, and to the wiſe connivance of the magiſtrate (who watches, no doubt, while he deems it politic to wink) to nip Dr. Prieſtley's goodly projects in the bud: which nothing would be ſo likely to ripen to a dangerous effect, as conſtraint exceſſively, or unſeaſonably, uſed. Thanks, however, are due to him, from all lovers of their country, for the miſchief which he wants not the inclination to do, if he could find the means of doing it. In Gratitude's eſtimation, the Will is ever to be taken for the Deed.

3. IN his Firſt Letters to me, and in former publications, Dr. Prieſtley profeſſed to diſbelieve an inſpiration of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts; in any greater

greater extent, than might be conſiſtent with the liberty which he uſes, of criticiſing their reaſonings and their narrations. I had a hope that denying, as he does, our Lord's divinity, he ſtill admitted, in ſome figurative ſenſe, that "all the fulneſs of the "Godhead dwells in him bodily." I had a hope, that he believed, at leaſt, an unlimited inſpiration (ſince he diſbelieves any nearer communion with the Godhead) of him to whom "the Spirit was "not given by meaſure." I perceived, with concern, by his late publication, that "the plenary in-"ſpiration of Chriſt*" is to be diſbelieved, no leſs than that of the Apoſtles. The aſſertion, indeed, is qualified, by confining it to caſes, "with reſpect to "which the object of their miſſion did not require "inſpiration." The object of their miſſion required, that the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity ſhould be infallible, in whatever opinions they maintained either about the nature of God, or the principles of his moral government; in whatever they taught concerning the terms, or the means, of man's acceptance and ſalvation; and in the facts which they have related of the Redeemer's life. If in theſe things they were not infallible; if an appeal lies from their aſſertions, to any man's private opinions; who ſhall draw the line, where the truth of their preaching ends, and their error commences? If their inſpiration was compleat upon theſe ſubjects; it was, to all intents and purpoſes, *plenary*. If it gave them no

* Importance of free inquiry, p. 35.

light about the true ſyſtem of the world, the circulation of the blood, or the properties of the Leyden Phial; it was not upon that account defective, as a religious inſpiration. The diſtinction therefore between a plenary inſpiration, and an inſpiration extending only to caſes in which the object of their miſſion required it, is vain and imaginary: and it is a meer pretence to profeſs a belief in the one, when the other is openly denied.

4. In his firſt Letters to me Dr. Prieſtley diſavowed his belief of the inſpiration of the Apoſtles as *writers* only *. Our bleſſed Lord left no writings. When, therefore, the fulneſs of his inſpiration is denied; the denial muſt be underſtood of his inſpiration, as an oral teacher. Dr. Prieſtley, therefore, muſt extend his diſbelief of the inſpiration of the Apoſtles to their oral doctrine; unleſs he would be guilty of the folly of ſetting the diſciple above his Lord.

5. It is ſome time ſince it was told me, that an admirer of Dr. Prieſtley's tenets, in converſation with a Divine of the Church of England, high in ſtation and in learning, had maintained, that our dying Lord's promiſe to the thief, that he ſhould be with our Lord that day in Paradiſe, was founded on a miſtaken notion, of him who gave it, about the ſtate of the dead. Dr. Prieſtley's diſciples well know, that the thief at this time is no where, and will not be in Paradiſe before the reſurrection. The leader of a party is not anſwerable for the abſurdities of all his followers:

* Firſt Letters, p. 132.

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I was unwilling, therefore, to make the concluſion, that Dr. Prieſtley himſelf ever would maintain, what he now maintains, the fallibility of Chriſt! I ſhudder while I relate theſe extravagancies, though it be only to expoſe them.

6. DR. PRIESTLEY hath given free ſcope to the powers of his eloquence, upon the ſubject of my pretended injuſtice to illuſtrious characters, living and dead. If injuſtice may be committed by praiſe beſtowed where it is unmerited, no leſs than by cenſure injuriouſly applied; Dr. Prieſtley may find it more difficult, than I have done, to refute the accuſation. A character now lives, not without its eminence, nor, I hope, without its moral worth, which Dr. Prieſtley ſeems to hold in exceſſive admiration; and upon which he is too apt to be laviſh of his praiſe. Few, who are acquainted with his writings, will be at a loſs to gueſs, that the character I ſpeak of is HIMSELF. As the analyzer of elaſtic fluids, he will be long remembered: but he ſometimes ſeems to claim reſpect as a GOOD CHRISTIAN, and a GOOD SUBJECT. If upon any branch of Chriſtian duty my conſcience be at perfect eaſe; the precept, "Judge not," is that which, I truſt, I have not tranſgreſſed. The motives, by which one man is impelled, are, for the moſt part, ſo imperfectly known to any other; that it ſeems to me cruel to ſuppoſe, that the evil, which appears in men's actions, is always anſwered by an equal malignity in their minds. I have ever, therefore, held it dangerous and uncharitable, to reaſon from the actions of men to their principles; and, from

PART II. CHAP. VI.

from my youth up, have been averſe to cenſorious judgement. But when men declare their motives and their principles; it were folly, to affect to judge them more favourably than they judge themſelves. I ſhall, therefore, not heſitate to ſay, that after a denial of our Lord's divinity, his pre-exiſtence, and the virtue of his atonement; after a denial, at laſt, of our Lord's plenary inſpiration; after a declaration of implacable enmity to the conſtitution under which he lives; under which he enjoys the licence of ſaying what he liſts, in a degree in which it never was enjoyed by the firſt citizens of the freeſt democracies; the goodneſs of his Chriſtianity, and his merit as a ſubject, are topics upon which it may be indiſcreet for the encomiaſt of Dr. Prieſtley to enlarge.

7. FOR eighteen months or more it hath been the boaſt of the Unitarian party, that the Archdeacon of St. Alban's hath been challenged to eſtabliſh facts which he had averred; that he hath been inſulted in his character, as a ſcholar and a man; charged with ignorance, miſrepreſentation, defamation, and calumny*; and, that under all this he hath continued ſpeechleſs†. He hath at laſt ſpoken; in a tone which, perhaps, will little endear him to the Unitarian zealots. It matters not. The time ſeems yet ſo diſtant, when the train which they are laying may be expected to explode; that the danger is exceedingly ſmall, that

* Second Letters, &c. Preface, p. xviii. pp. 1, 39, 47, 160, 161, 163, 208, & alibi paſſim.

† See Animadverſions on Mr. White, p. 84.

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he will ever be reduced to the alternative of renouncing his faith, or relinquiſhing his preferments: or to the harder alternative, which Dr. Prieſtley ſeems to threaten *, " of a priſon, with a good conſcience, or " his preſent emoluments without one." If thoſe happy times, of which Dr. Prieſtley propheſies, ſhould overtake him 'ere his courſe is finiſhed; when an Arian, or Socinian Parliament †, ſhall undertake the bleſſed buſineſs of a ſecond reformation, and depoſe Archbiſhops from their thrones, and Archdeacons from *their couches of preferment*; he humbly hopes, that he may be ſupplied with fortitude to act the part, which may not diſgrace his preſent profeſſions. The probability, however, ſeems to be, that 'ere thoſe times arrive (if they arrive at all, which we truſt they will not) my antagoniſt and I ſhall both be gone to thoſe unſeen abodes, where the din of controverſy and the din of war are equally unheard. There we ſhall reſt together, till the laſt trumpet ſummon us to ſtand before our God and King. That whatever of intemperate wrath, and carnal anger, hath mixed itſelf, on either ſide, with the zeal with which we have purſued our fierce contention, may then be forgiven to us both; is a prayer which I breathe from the bottom of my ſoul, and to which my antagoniſt, if he hath any part in the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, upon his bended knees will ſay, AMEN.

* See Second Letters, &c. p. 88.

† See Second Letters, p. 87.

SUPPLE-

SUPPLEMENTAL

DISQUISITIONS

UPON

CERTAIN POINTS

IN

DR. PRIESTLEY's

SECOND AND THIRD LETTERS

TO THE

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBAN's.

BY

SAMUEL,

LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID's.

DISQUISITION FIRST.

Of the Phraſe of "coming in the fleſh" *as uſed by St. Polycarp in his epiſtle to the Philippians.*

DR. PRIESTLEY in the Fifth of his Second Letters to me, to prove that the phraſe of "coming in the fleſh" aſſerts nothing more than our Lord's manhood, without any reference to a prior ſtate of exiſtence, alleges that the phraſe is ſo uſed by St. Polycarp, the diſciple of St. John, in his epiſtle to the Phillippians. The paſſage, in which Dr. Prieſtley imagines that he hath found this uſe of the phraſe, ſtands thus in Archbiſhop Wake's tranſlation, from which Dr. Prieſtley makes his quotation. Dis. I.

"WHOSOEVER does not confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt "is come in the fleſh, he is Antichriſt; and whoſoever "does not confeſs his ſuffering upon the croſs, is "from the Devil; and whoſoever perverts the ora- "cles of the Lord to his own luſts, and ſays that there "ſhall be neither any reſurrection nor judgement, he "is the firſt-born of Satan."

BY an argument, the force of which will, I believe, be perceived by few, but his Unitarian brethren, Dr. Prieſtley

Dis. I. Prieſtley perſuades himſelf, that the Bleſſed Martyr, in this paſſage, is not deſcribing three different ſects, but that "he alludes to no more than one and the ſame "kind of perſons by all the three characters," i. e. by the denial of our Lord's coming in the fleſh, the denial of his ſufferings, and the denial of the general reſurrection and the future judgement.

HENCE he would infer, that the phraſe of "com-"ing in the fleſh," predicates the manhood of our Lord, and nothing more, as I conceive for this reaſon; for he hath not ſtated his argument very clearly. The denial of our Lord's coming in the fleſh muſt be ſomething that might conſiſt with the denial of his ſufferings; ſince the two errors (by Dr. Prieſtley's hypotheſis) were found in the ſame perſons. They, who denied the reality of our Lord's ſufferings, denied his manhood; and in that ſenſe they might, and they did, deny his coming in the fleſh. But his Divinity they denied not; on the contrary they ſtrenuouſly aſſerted a nature in him ſuperior at leaſt to the human. Any alluſion therefore, which may be ſuppoſed in the phraſe of his "coming in the fleſh," to an original nature in him more than human, they denied not. His manhood therefore, which is all that they, who are charged with a denial of his "coming in the fleſh," denied, is all that the phraſe imports.

THIS is the very moſt that I can make of my adverſary's argument. And in this ſtate of it (if I have miſrepreſented it, I moſt ſeriouſly declare it is without deſign) I confeſs myſelf too dull to perceive the connection of the premiſes and the concluſion. We of the

of the orthodox perſuaſion conceive that the phraſe of " coming in the fleſh" expreſſes the INCARNATION. That is to ſay, it contains this complex propoſition, that a Being originally Divine aſſumed the human nature. This complex propoſition they, who denied the reality of our Lord's ſufferings, denied; not in that part which affirms his divinity, but in that part which affirms his aſſumption of the manhood; and the denial of this was the foundation of their error about the ſufferings on the croſs. Theſe three characters of error, therefore, mentioned by St. Polycarp, might belong to one and the ſame ſort of perſons, as Dr. Prieſtley ſuppoſes that they did, and yet the phraſe of " coming in the fleſh" in its natural ſenſe may, for any thing that appears from St. Polycarp's own words, allude not to the manhood ſimply, but to the Catholic Doctrine of the Incarnation.

It muſt be obſerved however, and the fact is too well known to the learned in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory to require proof, that a great variety of ſects, differing from each other in the wild and impious opinions which they ſeverally maintained, were compriſed under the general name of GNOSTICS. To ſay therefore, that the one and ſame kind of perſons, alluded to by St. Polycarp under all theſe three different characters, was the Gnoſtics; is to ſay that this one and ſame kind of perſons was many different kinds. Of the various ſects that went under this common name, the Docetæ, who denied our Lord's genuine manhood, were one general branch; itſelf ſubdivided, if I miſtake not, into many diſtinct denominations: the Cerinthians,

Dis. I. thians, who denied his original Divinity, were another. Both these, equally, tho' in different ways, denied the proposition, that "Jesus Christ was come "in the flesh," in the sense in which the orthodox understand it. And I confess I am not sure, tho' Dr. Priestley says we are sure of it, that the denial of the resurrection, was not to be found in a third class, distinct from either of these two, and from every branch of the Gnostics. The two antient Heretics mentioned by St. Paul (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.) who said that the resurrection was past, and in that assertion, as St. Chrysostom observes, denied a resurrection to come and the general judgement, are not numbered, by the writers of antiquity, among the Gnostic teachers. (See Dr. Whitby's note upon 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.) The future judgement was more explicitly denied by these, than by the Gnostics; who only denied the resuscitation of the body. And I think it not unlikely, that they might be the persons to whom St. Polycarp, in his third character of damnable heresy, alludes. Be that as it may, it seems clear to me, that St. Polycarp, in the passage alleged by Dr. Priestley, describes three different sets of people; and I should paraphrase the whole passage thus:

"WHOEVER confesses not that Jesus Christ, the "ever blessed and only begotten Son of God, the "brightness of his glory and the express image of his "person, the eternal word by whom he made the "worlds, is come in the flesh, he is Antichrist. "And if any one, pretending to confess this, shall "yet

" yet deny the reality of his ſufferings, in his own Dis. I.
" proper and entire perſon, on the croſs; he alſo,
" notwithſtanding he confeſs the truth in the former
" article, is of the Devil. Again if any one confeſ-
" ſing both our Lord's coming in the fleſh, and his
" ſufferings and death, ſhall however pervert the ora-
" cles of God, accommodating the divine doctrine,
" to his own prejudices and conceits, and ſay that
" there ſhall be neither reſurrection nor judgement;
" this man, notwithſtanding his confeſſion of our
" Lord's incarnation and paſſion, is the firſt-born of
" Satan."

But whether St. Polycarp in this paſſage deſcribe three different ſort of Heretics, or one ſort by three characters, it is not very material to diſpute. The Bleſſed Martyr is not enumerating ſects, as an eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian; but as a preacher of the truth, he is warning the faithful againſt errors. He mentions three; any one of which would avail, in his judgment, to the perdition of him who ſhould maintain it. For I contend that nothing in the words of St. Polycarp himſelf, nor any known and admitted fact in the hiſtory of the hereſies of his times, makes it neceſſary to apply the deſcription in the whole to one ſect, rather than in the parts of it to three. I contend that the coming of our Lord in the fleſh, his paſſion, and the general reſurrection are three diſtinct things: the two firſt, for any thing that appears from St. Polycarp's words, as diſtinct from each other, as either is from the third: ſo diſtinct therefore from each other, that a perſon admitting the one might poſſibly not confeſs the other. I

Dis. I. contend therefore, that for any thing that appears from the words of St. Polycarp, a perſon confeſſing that our Lord came in the fleſh, might ſtill deny his ſufferings. The phraſe therefore of coming in the fleſh, for any thing that appears from St. Polycarp's own words, may denote ſomething more than our Lord's meer manhood. And I contend yet further, that although it could be proved that St. Polycarp alludes to one ſect; ſo that the coming in the fleſh muſt neceſſarily be ſo underſtood, that the denial of that coming and the denial of the ſufferings ſhould be conſiſtent errors; ſtill it will not follow, that the coming in the fleſh muſt be underſtood as deſcriptive ſimply of the manhood. If any one ſect indeed ſingly be deſcribed, the Docetæ muſt be that one; ſince their characteriſtic error makes an explicit part of the deſcription. But with their error the denial of the Incarnation was perfectly conſiſtent. Dr. Prieſtley thinks, that St. Polycarp condemns the Docetæ, becauſe they admitted not that Chriſt was a meer man. But if I ſay that St. Polycarp condemns them, not for maintaining that he was more than man, but for denying that being more than man, being indeed God, he was made man; and that, for this reaſon, he made choice of the phraſe of "coming in the fleſh" that he might not ſeem to condemn more of their doctrine than he really diſapproved; what is there in St. Polycarp's words to prove that I, rather than Dr. Prieſtley, miſinterpret?

It may ſeem, that if for any thing that appears from the writer's words, the phraſe may be interpreted

preted in either ſenſe; the true inference is, that it is ambiguous. This concluſion indeed follows, with reſpect to the uſe of the phraſe in this particular paſſage; and it is upon this very ground that I maintain the total inſignificance of the paſſage, to decide the matter in diſpute. In the fourth of my letters in reply to Dr. Prieſtley, I have conſidered the natural and internal force of this phraſe of "coming in the fleſh." I have ſhewn, that it contains ſuch evident alluſion to a prior condition of the perſon who ſo came, and to the power that he had of coming in various other ways, had it pleaſed him otherwiſe to come, that if the ſacred writers really meant to affirm, that our Lord was a meer man, and nothing more, no reaſon can be deviſed, why they ſhould make choice of ſuch uncouth myſterious words, for the enunciation of ſo ſimple a propoſition; which they might eaſily have ſtated in plain terms incapable of miſconſtruction. Dr. Prieſtley appeals from this reaſoning of mine upon the natural ſenſe of the words, to the uſage of writers; which, indeed, when it is clear and conſtant, muſt be allowed to outweigh all reaſoning from general principles: becauſe the particular ſenſe of a phraſe is a queſtion about a fact; and in all ſuch queſtions external evidence, when it can be had, muſt overpower theory. To prove that the uſage of the writers of antiquity ſettles the ſenſe of the phraſe in his favour, he alleges this paſſage of St. Polycarp's epiſtle, as an inſtance "that might ſatisfy me." But I ſay that no one, who thinks the meaning of the phraſe dubious, will be ſatisfied by this inſtance. For not to inſiſt, that the uſage of writers is very inſufficiently proved by a ſingle inſtance, Dis. I.

Dis. I. I maintain, that if the phraſe in queſtion were in itſelf equally capable of the two ſenſes, the low ſenſe to which the Unitarians would confine it, and the ſublimer ſenſe in which it is generally underſtood, it certainly might be taken in either in this paſſage of St. Polycarp; and that, in whatever light the paſſage be conſidered, whether as deſcriptive of three ſects, as I believe it to be, or of one only as Dr. Prieſtley underſtands it. This paſſage, therefore, is of no ſignificance in the argument; ſince no paſſage can be alleged, as an inſtance of any particular uſe of any phraſe, in which various ſenſes of the phraſe may equally ſuit the purpoſe of the writer.

To this neutral paſſage of St. Polycarp, I have on my ſide to oppoſe a very deciſive paſſage of St. Barnabas; in which the alluſion to a prior condition of our Lord, which I contend to be the natural import of the phraſe, is manifeſt; and is ſo neceſſary to the writer's purpoſe, that if the phraſe be underſtood without ſuch alluſion, the whole ſentence is nonſenſe. "For if "he had not *come in the fleſh*, how ſhould we mortals, "ſeeing him, have been preſerved? When they who "behold the ſun, which is to periſh and is the work of "his hands, are unable to look directly againſt its "rays." Let Dr. Prieſtley find a paſſage, in which the alluſion to our Lord's original glory is as neceſſarily excluded from the import of the phraſe, as it is included in it in this paſſage of St. Barnabas. And even then the only juſt inference will be, that the phraſe, is uſed variouſly, in a more reſtrained or larger ſignification, as may ſuit the particular occaſion on which it

is

is introduced: but that in its full and natural import it affirms the Incarnation.

But in truth Dr. Prieſtley ſeems to deal by St. Polycarp, as by St. John; by the diſciple as by the maſter. Devoted himſelf to the Unitarian doctrine, he takes it with him as a principle in the ſtudy of St. Polycarp, as of the New Teſtament, that the Creed of St. Polycarp, as of all the primitive Chriſtians, was Unitarian. Then, whatever expreſſions occur alluding to opinions of a different caſt, he interprets in the ſenſe, in which he and his Unitarian brethren would uſe them. From theſe expreſſions, ſo interpreted, he goes back to his original prejudice, that St. Polycarp held and taught an Unitarian Creed, as to a concluſion which he hath drawn, and can teach others to draw, from St. Polycarp's own writings. Alas! the ſum of all ſuch reaſonings is no more than this: I Joseph Priestley am an Unitarian, therefore ſuch was Polycarp. And the baſis of this argument is the ſuppoſed infallibility of Joseph Priestley.

DISQUISITION SECOND.

Of Tertullian's teſtimony againſt the Unitarians, and his uſe of the word IDIOTA.

DIS. II. DR. PRIESTLEY has made it an occaſion of great triumph to himſelf and to his party, that he has caught me tripping, as he thinks, in my Greek and Latin, in the tranſlation which I have given, in the Ninth of my Letters in Reply, of a certain paſſage in Tertullian's book againſt Praxeas; which is produced by him as an acknowledgement of Tertullian, that the Unitarians were in his time the majority of Chriſtians, and is repreſented by me as an aſſertion of the contrary. None but an idiot, as Dr. Prieſtley conceives, in the learned languages would imagine that the Engliſh word "idiot," which I have uſed in my tranſlation of that paſſage, might in any ſenſe render the Ἰδιώτης of the Greek or the *Idiota* of the Latins, which is the name by which, with other adjuncts, Tertullian deſcribes the Unitarians of his time. Dr. Prieſtley ſays in the Nineteenth of his Second Letters, ſect. 3. "What will be ſaid of the "man, who can tranſlate *Idiota*, idiot?" He hath now for ſome conſiderable time been receiving the incenſe of his own applauſe, and the triumphant acclamations of his party, on the occaſion of this victory gained over

over his daring adverſary, on the very ground on which the enemy had taken his ſtand with particular ſecurity. But it will be time enough to bind the laurel on their chieftain's ſpear, when they are ſure he is in poſſeſſion of the field.

In the Seventh of his Second Letters, Dr. Prieſtley ſays to me, "I will venture to ſay that it properly "ſignifies [the word *Idiota* in Latin, or Ἰδιώτης in "Greek properly ſignifies] an unlearned man; or a "perſon who has not had a liberal education." This Dr. Prieſtley ventures to affirm; and this I venture to deny. The word Ἰδιώτης hath ten diſtinct ſenſes, which I ſhall recite in order.

I. *A private perſon*; i. e. a perſon in private life, in oppoſition to a perſon in public office or employment, civil or military. In this ſenſe the word is chiefly uſed by the orators and hiſtorians, and by all writers who treat of popular ſubjects; and this is its firſt and proper ſenſe; as it is of all its ſenſes the moſt immediately connected with the ſenſe of the adjective Ἴδιος, from which the ſubſtantive Ἰδιώτης is immediately derived.

II. *A perſon in low life, one of the common people*; in oppoſition to perſons of condition. This is nothing more than an intenſion of the former ſenſe: private life in the extreme becoming obſcure and low.

III. *A Laic*, as diſtinguiſhed from a clerk. This ſenſe the Greek Fathers eaſily grafted upon the firſt:

Dis. II. firſt: the church being conſidered as a polity of its own kind, in which the Clergy bear the public offices, the Laity are citizens in private life. In a ſenſe nearly allied to this, the word ſeems to be uſed by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 16, to denote a private member of a congregation as diſtinguiſhed from the miniſter.

IV. *A perſon unſkilled in any particular ſcience or art*, in oppoſition to the profeſſors of it. The word thus uſed rather expreſſes the want of profeſſional ſkill, than of ordinary knowledge. In this ſenſe, the word is ſometimes conſtructed by the Attic writers with a genitive of the thing; and by ordinary writers, with an accuſative, either with or without a prepoſition. ὀυδενος ἰδιωτην ὀντα. Plat. in Tim. ἰδιωτης τουτο, κατα τουτο, or ὡς προς τουτο.

V. *A perſon deficient in any particular talent, habit, or accompliſhment.* In this ſenſe the word is ſometimes conſtructed with a dative of the thing. Ιδιωτης τῳ λογῳ, 2 Cor. xi. 16. In this ſenſe the word is uſed by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, to denote a common Chriſtian, not endowed with any of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, as diſtinguiſhed from perſons ſo gifted.

VI. *A perſon generally unlearned*; one who has not had a learned and liberal education. In this ſenſe, in conjunction with the epithet, ἀγραμματοι, the word is applied to the Apoſtles by the rulers of the Jews. Acts iv. 13.

VII. The

VII. The plural Ἰδιῶται, ſignifies *Individuals*; citizens, individually conſidered, as diſtinguiſhed from the collective body, the ſtate.

VIII. The plural Ἰδιῶται, is a collective name for the illiterate vulgar, in particular reference to their general want of accompliſhment, in literature, the ſciences and the arts. Ὁ πολυς ὁμιλος, ὃς ἰδιῶτας οἱ σοφοι καλεσι. Lucian.

IX. Hence among philoſophers and ſophiſts, and pretenders to that ſort of taſte, which is now called *Virtú*, it became a name of reproach, which they gave to thoſe, whom they thought diſgracefully deficient in thoſe accompliſhments, which they valued and admired in themſelves. Thus the great Roman peculator, ſeeking to hide his avarice under a maſk of affected taſte for the works of the Greek maſters, reproached his accuſers with idiotcy in this ſenſe of the word. Erat apud Heium ſacrarium———peranti-quum, in quo ſigna pulcherrima quatuor———quæ non modo iſtum, hominem ingenioſum & intelligentem, verum etiam quemvis noſtrûm, quos iſte *idiotas* appellat, delectare poſſent. Cic. in Verrem. Act 2. Lib. iv. c. 2.

X. And becauſe the faculties are apt to be dull, when they have not been ſharpened by exerciſe upon any ſubject whatſoever; Ἰδιῶται, from its uſe in the ſenſe of illiterate and uncultivated, comes to be an opprobrious name for the *dull* and *ſtupid*, without any reference to the want of education, as the cauſe of

Dis. II.

of the ſtupidity. It never indeed, as far as I know, refers to that conſtitutional defect of the faculty of reaſon, which is the peculiar ſenſe of the correſponding word of our language in our ſtatutes and law-books. But it denotes the goodly qualities of ſtupidity and ignorance in the groſs, like our vernacular words, *dunce*, *booby*, and their ſynonyms.

THAT this laſt is the ſenſe in which it is uſed by Tertullian, in the paſſage in queſtion, is ſufficiently evident from the very ſtructure of the ſentence. Whoever knows the force of the phraſe, *pœne dixerim*, which is probably as little underſtood by Dr. Prieſtley as St. Jerome's, *quid dicam*; but whoever knows the true force of this phraſe, will allow that the epithets, *imprudentes* and *idiotæ*, which are introduced by it, muſt contain ſome high intenſion and aggravation of the qualities, whatever they may be, which are contained in the notion of the preceding adjective, *ſimplices*: an aggravation in ſuch degree, that the writer thinks it neceſſary to apologize for the ſtrength and ſeverity of the terms, which he finds himſelf obliged to employ. This is the force of the phraſe, *pœne dixerim*; to take away what may ſeem too much in the terms, which a writer is about to employ, when he fears they may ſeem exceſſive, notwithſtanding that they are the loweſt which will convey his full meaning, and do juſtice to his argument. The *imprudentes* therefore of Tertullian are a ſort of people in diſcernment and information many degrees below his *ſimplices*: and his *idiotæ* are ſtill below his *imprudentes*. All this is evident, to thoſe who have any

any real knowledge of the Latin language, from the bare ſtructure of the ſentence, whatever the proper uſe of each of the three words may be, among the polite writers of the Auguſtan age. As equivalent to the Latin *idiotæ*, as it is uſed by Tertullian in this paſſage, I employed our Engliſh word *idiots*. I employed the Engliſh word, to expreſs that extream degree of ignorance and ſtupidity, for which our language furniſhes no other word ſufficiently contemptuous; of which Tertullian affirms the Unitarians of his day, like their younger brethren in our own, exhibited a notable example. It was little to be apprehended, that even Unitarian prejudice would render any one ſo much an idiot in ſtyle and phraſeology, as not to perceive, that I uſed not the word in what in Engliſh is its forenſic ſenſe; eſpecially when in an expoſition of the paſſage, which, at the diſtance of a few lines, follows my tranſlation, I explain it by the words "dull," and "perſons of mean attainments." Dis. II.

Dr. PRIESTLEY aſks me, in the Seventh of his Second Letters, "Pray, Sir, in what lexicon or dictionary, ordinary or extraordinary, did you find "this ſenſe of the term *idiota* in Latin, or ἰδιώτης in "Greek?" Dr. Prieſtley is ventureſome in propounding queſtions like this, and ſeems to be one of thoſe, whom repeated miſcarriages cannot render wary and diſcreet. I certainly conſulted no lexicon, for the purpoſe of making my tranſlation of that plain paſſage of Tertullian: and it is within theſe very few days, that I have taken the trouble to conſult lexicons, in order to diſcover, what ground my adverſary may have

Dis. II. have found in their defects, for the confidence which the queſtion beſpeaks. I will now refer him to certain lexicons, never known perhaps in the Academy at Warrington, but ſuch as a late Greek profeſſor there might occaſionally have condeſcended to conſult, with advantage to himſelf and to his pupils. The firſt is that old gloſſary, which was found annexed to ſome copies of St. Cyril, and is publiſhed by Henry Stephens, in the appendix to his Greek Theſaurus. In this gloſſary the word Ἰδιώτης is expounded by ὁ μὴ νομικὸν; words which expreſs not the want of education, but dullneſs of the natural faculties. The ſecond is Robert Stephens's *Dictionarium Latino-Gallicum*, in which the word *idiota* is rendered *Ung lourdault, qui n'eſt pas des plus fins du monde, qui n'ha pas grand eſprit, Idiot.* The third is the learned Calepini's *Dictionarium Octolingue*, in which the author gives the French words *lourdaut, ſot, ignorant*, and the Engliſh words, *an idiot, a fool*, as rendering the Latin *idiota*. The fourth is the Theſaurus of our learned countryman Cooper, in which *idiota* is thus expounded; *One that is not very fine-witted*; *an ideot*. If my adverſary demand the authority of an ordinary dictionary, I will refer him to a very ordinary dictionary indeed; to a dictionary in every ſchool-boy's hand. Let him turn to the word *idiota* in Ainſworth; he will find among its firſt ſenſes, *an idiot*.

I ABIDE therefore by my aſſertion, that this paſſage of Tertullian, which Dr. Prieſtley miſtakes for a teſtimony of the popularity of his favourite opinions in Tertullian's time, is no ſuch teſtimony; but a charge of

of ignorance againſt his party: of ſuch ignorance, as would invalidate the plea of numbers, if that plea could be ſet up.

And that this is the true repreſentation of Tertullian's meaning, may be proved, without inſiſting upon any particular force of the word *idiotæ*, from the neceſſary indiſputable ſenſe of the adverb *ſemper*; which extends Tertullian's propoſition, concerning the majority of believers, from his own time in particular to all time. He ſays not, what were, or what were not, the prevailing opinions of his own times: but he ſays, that thoſe perſons, who come under the characters of *ſimplices*, *imprudentes*, and *idiotæ* (that is, according to Dr. Prieſtley's own tranſlation, which yet I admit not otherwiſe than *diſputandi gratiâ*, for I have ſtill "the aſſurance" to call my own an exact tranſlation) but according to Dr. Prieſtley's own tranſlation, Tertullian ſays, that perſons, who come under the character of "the ſimple, the ignorant, and the "unlearned," whatever their opinions at one time or another may be, are, in all times, the greater part of believers: as indeed they muſt be of every ſociety collected indiſcriminately, as the church is, from all ranks of men. Tertullian alleges that perſons of that deſcription, in his time, meaning to aſſert, what they little underſtood, the Divine Monarchy, were ſtartled at the doctrine of the Trinity, which they as little underſtood. This is the only ſenſe in which Tertullian's words can be taken; unleſs ſome Unitarian adventurer in criticiſm ſhall be able to prove, that the adverb

Dis. II. adverb *ſemper* is equivalent to *nunc*, expreſſive of preſent time excluſively.

Dr. PRIESTLEY "wonders at my aſſurance" in another circumſtance: namely, that I ſhould limit, as he ſays, what Tertullian affirms, as he would have him underſtood, of the whole body of the *ſimplices* and *idiotæ* to ſome of them. In this limitation, he ſays, I am altogether unwarranted. But when Tertullian ſays, that ſimple perſons and *idiotæ* are ſtartled at the œconomy, the natural ſenſe of the words is, that this ſcruple was incident chiefly to perſons of that deſcription; not that it was to be found in the whole body of the common people. He inſinuates that perſons of that weak character *only* were liable to that alarm. Had he meant to ſpeak of the whole body of the common people, he muſt have uſed phraſes of another caſt; as *vulgus indoctum*, or *genus hominum ſimplex*. Dr. Prieſtley's complaint againſt me might have ſeemed to have ſome foundation, had the word "ſome" been prefixed to "ſimple perſons" in my tranſlation. But it only appears in an expoſition of the paſſage, which follows the tranſlation. And ſurely having tranſlated the paſſage exactly, I took no unwarrantable liberty in adding an explanation of the author's ſenſe (or of what I take to be his ſenſe) in my own words. Had Dr. Prieſtley's looſe expoſitions of the paſſages in antient writers, which he cites, been always accompanied with exact tranſlations; the world would have had leſs reaſon to ſtand aghaſt at his aſſurance and ill-diſſembled management. But to what purpoſe can it be to hold an argument with a man,

man, who is too hafty to diſtinguiſh between what profeſſes to be paraphraſe, and what pretends to be exact tranſlation; who has the vanity to play the critic in languages, to the idioms of which he is a ſtranger; and the audacity to challenge the production of authorities, without taking the pains to inform himſelf, in which ſcale the weight of authority may preponderate? "Pray, Sir, in what lexicon or dic- "tionary, ordinary or extraordinary, do you find "*idiota* in Latin, or Ἰδιώτης in Greek rendered *idiot?*" Vide Gloſſarium Vetus; R. Steph. Calepin. Cooper. Ainſworth. Dis. II.

DISQUISITION THIRD.

On what is found relating to the Ebionites in the writings of IRENÆUS; *in confutation of an argument, advanced by Dr. Prieſtley in favour of the Ebionites, in the Third of his Firſt, and the Fourth of his Second Letters, from the writings of Irenæus in particular.*

DIS. III. THE particular argument in favour of the Ebionites, which Dr. Prieſtley, in the Third of his Firſt Letters to me, attempted to draw from the writings of Irenæus, was ſo ably, though conciſely, anſwered in the Monthly Review for January 1784, by Mr. Badcock; who, taking facts as Dr. Prieſtley choſe to ſtate them, ſhewed, even upon his own ſtatement of the facts, the utter futility of his concluſion; inaſmuch as the contrary concluſion might be drawn with equal probability from the ſame aſſumptions; that when I wrote my Letters in Reply, I thought I might be excuſed if I paſſed by this argument without any other notice, than a ſlight reference to Mr. Badcock's confutation. But in the Sixth of his Second Letters, Dr. Prieſtley hath attempted to refit this ſhattered piece of his artillery, and to bring it again into action.

HE ſays to me, "It is truly remarkable, and may "not have been obſerved by you, as indeed it was "not

" not by myſelf till very lately,"—It had indeed been ſtrange, if any ſagacity of remark in me had outrun Dr. Prieſtley's!—" that Irenæus, who has written " ſo large a work on the ſubject of hereſy, after the " time of Juſtin, in a country where it is probable " there were fewer Unitarians, again and again cha- " racteriſes them in ſuch a manner as makes it evi- " dent, that even he did not conſider any other per- " ſons as Heretics, beſides the Gnoſtics. He ex- " preſſes a great diſlike of the Ebionites, but he ne- " ver calls them Heretics." *

Freely I reſign to Dr. Prieſtley the honour of having been the firſt to make this remark. At leaſt I ſhall put in no claim for myſelf, or for my friends. If any plagiariſm hath been committed, which I pretend not in this particular inſtance to aſſert, the depredation muſt have been made upon ſome of his own party. For I will venture to affirm, that the remark, ſo far as it extends to Irenæus's acquittal of the Ebionites from the imputation of hereſy, could have occurred to none, that had not been in ſome good degree an IDIOT in the writings of Irenæus. It could have occurred to none, that had known more of the work of Irenæus, than is to be learned from an occaſional reference to particular paſſages, by the help of an Index.

The great object of Irenæus, in his work againſt hereſies, is to aſſert the Scripture doctrines of the

* Second Letters, p. 56.

Dis. III. unity of God, and the Incarnation of the Divine Word, in their original ſimplicity, againſt the numerous ſectaries of his times, who, from various views and motives, had variouſly disfigured and diſguiſed them. Some thought, that they gave a clear ſolution of the dark queſtion about the origin of evil, when they maintained that the world is the work of one or more intelligences, far inferior to the firſt mind. Some, to account for ſome circumſtances of contrariety, that may appear upon a ſuperficial view of the Old and the New Teſtament, taught that the God of the Jews was a diſtinct being from the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some, to ſolve the difficulties in the great doctrine of the incarnation, indulged in a moſt criminal wantonneſs of ſpeculation concerning the perſon of Chriſt. Some, affecting a deep myſterious wiſdom, endeavoured to explain, in obſcure and ill-imagined allegories, the proceſſion of the different orders of intellect and life from the Divine Mind, and the production of the viſible world. Some, the moſt profane and hardened, artfully availed themſelves of certain myſterious points of the Chriſtian doctrine, to give perſonal conſequence to themſelves, and to gain credit among the vulgar to the moſt impious pretenſions. To guard the faithful againſt theſe various ſeductions, and to eſtabliſh them in the belief of the true Scripture doctrine, of ONE GOD, abſolute in power and in all perfection, who, by his Eternal Word, created all things in Heaven and in earth, viſible and inviſible; and, having in time paſt ſpoken to the fathers by the Prophets, hath ſpoken in the laſt days by his Son, the ſame Divine Word incarnate, and hath reconciled

reconciled mankind to himſelf, through him, who, to effect this reconciliation, united the manhood to the Godhead in his own perſon: to eſtabliſh the faithful in this doctrine, Irenæus undertakes the confutation of thoſe extravagant conceits, by which it is either contradicted, or perverted and diſgraced; never loſing ſight of his two cardinal points, the Unity of God, and the Incarnation of the Word.

His whole work conſiſts of five books. Of theſe, the Firſt is hiſtorical; exhibiting a general view of hæretical opinions, in thoſe points, in which they differed moſt eſſentially from genuine Chriſtianity; reciting the names of the principal Hæreſiarchs; deſcribing their characters, and relating the varieties of opinion, by which the different ſects were diſtinguiſhed.

In the Second book, the author profeſſes to refute, the extravagant opinions recited in the firſt, by general arguments expoſing the incoherence and intrinſic abſurdity of each. In the Third, he engages to bring a confutation of the ſame opinions from Scripture in general: in the Fourth, from our Lord's own diſcourſes in particular: in the Fifth, from our Lord's own words, and the writings of St. Paul.

In the Firſt book, after a general recital of the principal extravagancies of the Valentinians, the author undertakes to ſhew, that Simon Magus was the parent of all hereſy; and that the diſtinguiſhing conceits of every ſect attached to one point or another of his doctrine. For this purpoſe, he gives a liſt of Hæreſiarchs

Dis. III. ſiarchs and ſects from Simon Magus in ſucceſſion to his own time, ſpecifying the particular doctrines of each. In this liſt, the Ebionites have the honour to have the name of their ſect enrolled* between the Cerinthians and Nicolaitans. If Irenæus deemed them not Heretics, he has ſurely put them in bad company. At no great diſtance from the Ebionites, he introduces Marcion†. This Marcion was a moſt diſtinguiſhed Heretic; not only for the extravagance and impiety of his doctrine, but for the liberty which he took with the books of the New Teſtament; altering or expunging whatever he diſliked, till he made the Holy Scriptures, as he thought, ſpeak his own ſentiments. Irenæus promiſes a particular confutation of the opinions of Marcion, from the Scriptures as Marcion himſelf received them. But notwithſtanding this deſign, he found it neceſſary, he ſays, to mention him in this place in order to make out his aſſertion, "that all who adulterated the truth, and "impugned the public doctrine of the Church, were "diſciples of Simon the Samaritan Sorcerer‡." Intimating, that having in his contemplation a particu-

* Lib. I. Cap. xxvi.

† Lib. I. Cap. xxix.

‡ Sed huic quidem————ſeorſum contradicemus; ex ejus ſcriptis arguentes eum, et ex iis ſermonibus, qui apud eum obſervati ſunt, Domini et Apoſtoli, quibus ipſe utitur, everſionem ejus facientes præſtante Deo. Nunc autem neceſſario meminimus ejus, ut ſcires quoniam omnes, qui quoquo modo adulterant veritatem, et præconium Eccleſiæ lædunt, Simonis Samaritani Magi diſcipuli et ſucceſſores ſunt. Lib. I. cap. xxix & xxx.

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lar work upon the hereſy of Marcion, he would have omitted the mention of him in this place, but that the omiſſion would have rendered the liſt of Hæreſiarchs, deſcending from Simon Magus, defective. Here then we ſee both the author's attention to the accuracy of his liſt, and his own notion of what ſort of perſons they were, who had a right to a place in it. The accuracy of his liſt had certainly been as much vitiated by an improper inſertion, as by an omiſſion. Where then is the probability, than an author, who declares he would have omitted Marcion, but from a ſcrupulous attention to the accuracy of his catalogue of Hæreſiarchs, in defiance of any ſuch ſcruple, would have inſerted the Ebionites, had not their notorious hereſy, and their affinity with Simon Magus, given them an equal claim with Marcion, and with their next neighbours, the Cerinthians and Nicolaitans, to admiſſion? Again the author's notion of the ſort of perſons, that were to be included in his liſt, namely, "adulterators of the truth, impugners of the public "doctrine of the church, and diſciples of Simon the "Samaritan Sorcerer," clearly proves, what the public character of the Ebionites was, whom he hath enrolled among theſe worthies. To have regiſtered among the ſects allied to Simon Magus perſons, who lay under no public imputation of hereſy, however in his own private judgement he might ſee reaſon to reprobate their tenets, had been a very aukward proof of the general affinity between hereſy and Simon Magus. To the proof of this, a conſent or reſemblance of opinion between Simon Magus and thoſe

Dis. III. who were no heretics, or not generally deemed such, could little contribute. It would rather indeed conduce to the acquittal of Simon, than the condemnation of an innocent sect said to resemble him. The Ebionites, therefore, having a place in this list, by which Simon is to be proved the common parent and founder of all heresies, unquestionably partook of that character, which Irenæus makes the peculiar mark of that family. They were adulterators of the truth; not barely of what was truth in the private judgement of Irenæus, but they were impugners of the public doctrine of the church. If such persons were not Heretics, I have yet to learn the meaning of the name.

I AM well aware, that a laudable concern for the reputation of his ancestors will incline Dr. Priestley to put the question, in what circumstance the Ebionites resembled Simon Magus? Some resemblance, he will say, according to Irenæus's notions, was necessary to constitute a heresy. For if all Heretics resembled Simon Magus in some circumstance or another, they, who resembled him in none, were no Heretics.

To this, it may be answered, that Epiphanius, when he tells us that Ebion's Judaism was of the *Samaritan* cast, says what may be thought to imply a resemblance, in many circumstances, between this sect and the Samaritan Sorcerer. But the principle in which Irenæus, I doubt not, placed the resemblance, was no other than the cardinal doctrine of the Ebionites

nites of the meer humanity of our Lord. This, as it was taught by the Cerinthians and the firſt Ebionites, was indeed nothing more than a refinement upon the older error of the Docetæ, of which Simon was the firſt teacher. The Docetæ, thinking it beneath the dignity of a celeſtial being to undergo the life of a man, and to ſubmit to a violent and painful death, maintained that the body of Jeſus was a meer illuſion, and the whole ſcene of his ſufferings phantaſtic. Or if any of them admitted the reality of the ſufferings, they denied, however, that Jeſus was the ſufferer. The Cerinthians, whoſe doctrines the firſt Ebionites followed in what related to the perſon of our Lord, thought it more reaſonable to admit that Jeſus was a real man, the ſubject of real ſufferings. They maintained that he was a meer man; and they ſuppoſed a ſuperangelic being, which they called the Chriſt, to have been through life the guide and guardian of the man; ſomething more perhaps than a Socratic Dæmon, but yet diſtinct from the man, and exempt from all participation of his ſufferings. This is evidently a refinement upon the doctrine of the Docetæ. Both doctrines had a common object: to give the doctrine of the incarnation ſuch a turn, that a divine or ſuperangelic nature might not be involved in the miſeries of mortality. For this purpoſe the Docetæ denied the reality of the manhood; and the Ebionites, with the Cerinthians, maintained a ſeparate perſonality and diſtinct conditions of the man and the ſuperior being. Thus the affinity between the Ebionites and the Simonians is manifeſt; and the derivation

Dis. III. rivation of the one from the other, eaſy and natural; and I cannot but remark, that as the antient Ebionæan doctrine paſſes by a ſingle ſtep, the diſmiſſion of the ſuperangelic being, into the modern Unitarian; that too is traced to its ſource in the chimæras of the Samaritan Sorcerer. And thus both the Ebionites of antiquity, and the Unitarians of our own time, are in truth branches, or the offspring at leaſt, of Gnoſticiſm. And in this extended meaning of the word, I am ready to allow that Irenæus knew of no Heretics, but what are included under the general name of Gnoſtics. Be that as it may, I maintain, that the firſt book of Irenæus, by the enrolment therein made of the Ebionites, in a liſt, in which the author had done diſſervice to his own argument, had he inſerted any but known Heretics, affords a clear argument that the Ebionites were Heretics, in the judgement of the church, in the time of Irenæus.

In the Second book of Irenæus no mention of the Ebionites occurs either by name, or by deſcription. Nor is this, indeed, the place, where any mention of that ſect might be expected. The argument of the ſecond book is a confutation of heretical opinions from principles of meer reaſon; from general views of their intrinſic abſurdity and incoherence. But the error of the Ebionites is not of the number of thoſe that may be ſo confuted. The great myſtery of godlineſs, the incarnation of the Divine Word, was no diſcovery of natural reaſon. Reaſon, therefore, whoſe natural powers, upon this ſubject, gave no knowledge of the truth, is inſufficient without the aid of revela-

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tion to the refutation of the contrary falſehood. The conviction of the Ebionites muſt reſt entirely upon Holy Writ. Dis. III

ACCORDINGLY in the Third book, in which the confutation is drawn from Scripture, the Ebionites are thus mentioned. " They again who ſay, that he " was meerly a man, engendered of Joſeph, die; con- " tinuing in the bondage of the former diſobedience, " having to the laſt no conjunction with the word of " God the Father, nor receiving freedom through " the Son, according to that ſaying of his own, *If* " *the Son give you manumiſſion, ye ſhall be free indeed.* " But not knowing him, who is the Emmanuel of the " Virgin, they are deprived of his gift, which is eter- " nal life. And not receiving the incorruptible word, " they continue in the mortal fleſh, and are liable to " the natural debt of death, not accepting the anti- " dote of life*."

THAT the Ebionites are the perſons intended in this paſſage, we need not be ſolicitous to prove; ſince

* Rurſus autem qui nudè tantum hominem eum dicunt ex Joſeph generatum, perſeverantes in ſervitute priſtinæ inobedientiæ moriuntur, nondum commixti verbo Dei Patris, neque per Filium percipientes libertatem, quemadmodum ipſe ait; *ſi Filius vos manumiſerit, veré liberi eritis.* Ignorantes autem eum qui ex Virgine eſt Emmanuel, privantur munere ejus, quod eſt vita æterna: non recipientes autem Verbum incorruptionis perſeverant in carne mortali, et ſunt debitores mortis, antidotum vitæ non accipientes. Lib. 3. Cap. xxi.

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Dis. III. a part of the paſſage is cited by Dr. Prieſtley himſelf, in the appendix of his firſt letters, as unqueſtionably relating to that ſect. In this paſſage their error, and their crime, is placed in their aſſertion, that our Lord was a meer man, the ſon of Joſeph. This error is called a rejection of the incorruptible word, a refuſal of the antidote of life. Theſe are phraſes evidently deſcriptive of a hardened infidelity, which liſtens not, with a due ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding, to the evangelical doctrine. The Ebionites therefore, by their wicked doctrine of our Lord's meer humanity, ſeemed to Irenæus to be meer infidels; and in conſequence of this infidelity "to die in the bondage of "the former diſobedience, having to the laſt no con-"nection with the word of God the Father, conti-"nuing in the mortal fleſh, and liable to the natu-"ral debt of death." Theſe expreſſions deſcribe the miſerable condition of the unconverted and impenitent; who, notwithſtanding, what the Son of God hath done and ſuffered for thoſe who will believe in him, remain obnoxious to the guilt and puniſhment of their own ſins, as well as to all the dreadful conſequences of the firſt tranſgreſſion. Such Irenæus deemed the dangerous ſituation of theſe infidel Ebionites. He ſays further, that for their ignorance of him who is the Emmanuel of the Virgin, and in conſequence of the infidelity and impenitence, of which that ignorance was, in his judgement, a ſure ſymptom, "they are deprived of the gift of that Emmanuel, "which gift is eternal life." To be deprived of that life eternal, which is the gift of the Emmanuel, is the ſame thing in the phraſeology of the antient writers,

ters, as to be under a ſentence of eternal damnation. Theſe Ebionites, therefore, who ſaid that our Lord was a meer man, convicted by that wicked aſſertion of an evil heart of impenitence and unbelief, in the opinion of Irenæus lay under a ſentence of eternal puniſhment, which nothing but a renunciation of their error, and a ſincere repentance might avert. Nothing can be clearer, than, that in this paſſage, they are taxed with infidelity and impenitence, and threatened with the doom which awaits ſuch crimes. But Dr. Prieſtley can find no ſuch ſentence of damnation, in this paſſage, paſſed upon the Ebionites. " Irenæus " *muſt* have meant, not that the Ebionites in par- " ticular, but that mankind in general, could have " had no reſurrection, if the Ebionæan doctrine had " been true*." That is, Irenæus, expreſsly ſpeaking of the Ebionites in particular, *muſt* be underſtood of mankind in general. Speaking of their particular puniſhment he *muſt* be underſtood to ſpeak of a general calamity. The ground of the neceſſity is obvious. In no other way of interpretation, can what Irenæus hath actually ſaid of the Ebionites, be brought to agree with what Dr. Prieſtley, for the intereſt of his cauſe, *muſt* wiſh he had ſaid about them. The learned Feuardentius, who lived not to be enlightened by the new revelations of our modern Unitarians, and above all, by Dr. Prieſtley's ingenious expoſitions of the Scriptures and the Fathers, was blind to this neceſſity. " Irenæus contends in this chapter, ſays Feuar- " dentius, that they who make Chriſt the Son of Jo-

* Firſt Letters, p. 118.

" ſeph,

Dis. III. " ſeph, attain neither remiſſion of ſins, nor the adop-
" tion of the Sons of God, nor ſo much as the right
" of a bleſſed reſurrection*."

In the Fourth book, after a confutation of many heretical opinions, Irenæus lays down this maxim †; that the believer, who ſteddily adheres to the great principle of one God, who created all things by his word, and ſtudies the Scriptures with the aſſiſtance of the Preſbyters of the church, who were in poſſeſſion, as Irenæus ſays, of the doctrine of the Apoſtles, will extricate himſelf from the difficulties, which were the ſtumbling-blocks of Heretics. In particular he will perceive the connection and affinity between the Old Teſtament and the New, and will underſtand that the ſame God was the author of both. " Such a diſciple,
" he ſays, being truly ſpiritual, inaſmuch as he receiv-
" eth the ſpirit of God, who under all the diſpenſa-
" tions of God was preſent with men, and announced
" the future, and ſheweth the preſent, and relateth
" the paſt; [ſuch a ſpiritual diſciple] judgeth all, but
" is judged himſelf of none ‡." *He judgeth all*; that is, he diſcerns in what point the error of any errone-

* Contendit autem hoc capite Irenæus, illos nec peccatorum remiſſionem, nec adoptionem filiorum Dei, imo nec jus beatæ reſurrectionis aſſequi, qui Chriſtum filium Joſeph conſtituunt. *Feuardentius ad laudatum locum Irenæi.*

† Lib. 4. Cap. lii.

‡ Talis diſcipulus verè ſpiritalis, recipiens Spiritum Dei, qui ab initio, in univerſis diſpoſitionibus Dei, affuit hominibus, et futura annuntiavit, et præſentia oſtendit, et præterita enarrat, judicat quidem omnes, ipſe autem à nemine judicatur. Lib. 4. Cap. liii.

ous

ous doctrine lies, and he can evince its inconsistence with the truth. But he, himself, having the written word, and the doctrine of the apostles for his guide, and enjoying the secret illumination of the Spirit, is inconfutable. Irenæus illustrates and amplifies this aphorism, by an application of it to different sects; shewing how, and upon what principles, the spiritual disciple will *judge them*; i. e. expose and refute their errors. This amplification of the general sentiment makes a very long period; which some of the early editors (Grynæus I believe) hath broken into no less than nine chapters, prefixing to each a proper title. This spiritual disciple, Irenæus says, will judge the Gentiles*,—will judge the Jews †,—will judge the Marcionites ‡,—will judge the Valentinians§.—" He will " also judge the vain bablings of wicked Gnostics, " shewing them to be the disciples of Simon Ma- " gus‖.—He will also judge the Ebionites. How " can they be saved, unless he, who wrought their " salvation upon earth, be God**." Dr. Priestley imagines, that Irenæus says of the Ebionites that " God will judge them††." This mistake, of putting God's judgement for the sound believer's judgement, is indeed of no importance in the argument. I mention it only as one instance of that practice, of

* Lib. 4. Cap. liv. † Cap. lv. ‡ Cap. lvii. § Cap. lviii.

‖ Judicabit autem et vaniloquia pravorum Gnosticorum, Simonis eos Magi discipulos ostendens. Cap. lviii.

** Judicabit autem et Ebionitas; quomodo possunt salvari, nisi Deus est qui salutem eorum super terram operatus est? Cap. lix.

†† First Letters, p. 33.

which

Dis. III. which I accuſe Dr. Prieſtley, of taking ſhort detached paſſages in the ſenſe which may firſt occur to him, without knowing, and without examining, with what they may be connected in the context of the author's diſcourſe. *Talis diſcipulus vere ſpiritalis* is the ſubject of the verb *Judicabit* from the LIIId. chapter to the end of the LXIId. Irenæus ſays then, that the ſpiritual diſciple "will judge the Ebionites." And this is the principle upon which he will judge them, "that "they could not be ſaved, unleſs he, who wrought "their ſalvation upon earth, be God." But this, Dr. Prieſtley ſays, "is no ſentence of damnation paſſed upon them in particular, for holding their doctrine, but an argument uſed by him to refute them; "and is the ſame as if he had ſaid, mankind in general could not be ſaved, if Chriſt had not been God "as well as Man *." This ſhall be granted. What Irenæus ſays, in the paſſage now under conſideration, is nothing more than an argument for the refutation of the Ebionites; and the principle of this argument is rightly ſtated by Dr. Prieſtley. But by whom is this argument uſed? By Irenæus? Not ſimply by Irenæus in his own perſon. It is the argument which Irenæus puts in the mouth of the ſpiritual diſciple. The ſpiritual diſciple, that is, every ſpiritual diſciple, every ſound believer is the perſon, who upon theſe principles will confute the Ebionites. Irenæus, therefore, diſtinguiſhing the Ebionites, who are confuted, from every ſpiritual diſciple, who confutes, ſets the former out of the ſociety of ſpiritual diſciples, of ſound believers, and puts them in the claſs of thoſe who are not ſpiritual; that is, of thoſe who have not the ſpirit.

* Firſt Letters, p. 33.

For

For were they ſpiritual, they could not be the objects of the ſpiritual diſciple's oppoſition and confutation. But the claſs of thoſe, who are not ſpiritual, is the choice ſociety of heretics and infidels. For *he, who hath not the ſpirit of Chriſt, is none of his.* In this paſſage, therefore, the Ebionites are clearly ranked with Heretics.

It deſerves particular notice, that one circumſtance in Irenæus's deſcription of the ſpiritual diſciple, who judges theſe Ebionites, is, that "he is a follower of the public doctrine of the church*." Whence it might ſeem no unnatural concluſion, if other proof of the thing were wanting, that the public judgement of the church, no leſs than the ſentiments of Irenæus, was againſt the Ebionites; that they were oppoſers of the public doctrine, and of courſe, in the public eſtimation, Heretics. But the ſame thing indeed is ſufficiently implied in the repreſentation given them, as maintainers of an opinion, which ſtruck at the very root of the doctrine of redemption, and lay open to every ſound believer's confutation.

In the Fifth book, the Ebionites are mentioned among Heretics, whoſe doctrines fall all together, when the great ſcheme of man's redemption is rightly underſtood. "Our Lord redeeming us by his own "blood, and giving his own ſoul for our ſoul, and

* Si et ſcripturam diligenter legerit, apud eos qui in Eccleſiâ ſunt preſbyteri, apud quos eſt apoſtolica doctrina. cap. lii.

Dis. III.

" his body for our bodies, and pouring out the ſpirit
" of the Father for the adunion and communion of
" God with men, bringing God down to men by
" the ſpirit, and again, by his incarnation, raiſing
" man to God, and, in his advent, actually and aſ-
" ſuredly conferring on us incorruptibility by com-
" munion with God; the doctrines of Heretics fall
" all together. For they are vain, who ſay that his
" appearance was phantaſtic.—The Valentinians,
" therefore, are vain, who hold this doctrine.—The
" Ebionites alſo, are vain, not receiving the union of
" God and man, by faith, &c*."

THE only uſe, which Dr. Prieſtley makes of this paſſage; is to take the clauſe relating to the Ebionites by itſelf, and to remark that " the harſheſt epithet,
" which Irenæus here applies to that ſect, is that of
" *Vani*; which conſidering the manner of the anti-
" ents, he ſays, is certainly very moderate †." But however moderate he may think this epithet, had he

* Suo igitur ſanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam ſuam pro noſtrâ animâ, et carnem ſuam pro noſtris carnibus, et effundente Spiritum Patris in adunitionem et communionem Dei et hominum, ad homines quidem deponente Deum per Spiritum, ad Deum autem rurſus imponente hominem per ſuam incarnationem, et firmé et veré in ſuo adventu donante nobis incorruptelam, per communionem quæ eſt ad Deum; perierunt omnes hæreticorum doctrinæ. Vani autem ſunt qui putativé dicunt eum apparuiſſe——Vani igitur qui á Valentino ſunt, hoc dogmatizantes——Vani autem et Ebionæi, unitionem Dei et Hominis per fidem non recipientes in ſuam *animam*. Lib. 5. Cap. I.

† Firſt Letters, p. 33.

attended

attended to the context, he would have ſeen that it is the very ſame epithet, which Irenæus in this ſame place applies to the Docetæ, the Valentinians, and the moſt impious of the Gnoſtics. It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that it is a term of more ſevere reproach, than Dr. Prieſtley apprehends. It imports indeed that they, to whom it is applied, were perſons *become vain in their imaginations*, cheriſhing opinions void of foundation in Scripture and in truth, ſuch as aroſe out of a miſ-apprehenſion of the whole ſcheme of revealed religion. And whatever the particular ſenſe of this epithet may be, the manner, in which the mention of the Ebionites is introduced, ſhews that they are mentioned as affording one inſtance of Heretics of that deſcription.

In another paſſage of this fifth book, Irenæus ſays of Heretics in general, that "they are unlearned, "ignorant of the divine diſpenſations, particularly of "the ſcheme reſpecting man, blind to the truth, and "that they contradict their own ſalvation." This general charge he illuſtrates and confirms by ſpecifying the particular abſurdities of different ſects. "Some, "he ſays, introducing another Father beſide the De-"miurgus. Some again ſaying that the world, and "the ſubſtance of it were made by certain Angels. "Some, that the ſubſtance of the world ſprang up "from itſelf, and is ſelf-produced, far ſeparate from "him, who, according to them, is the Father. "Some, that it took its ſubſtance from corruption "and ignorance, being among the things within the "Father. Some treat the doctrine of our Lord's "viſible advent with contempt, not admitting the

Dis. III. " Incarnation. Some ignorant of the diſpenſation of " the Virgin, ſay that he was begotten by Joſeph, " Some, &c*."

Dr. PRIESTLEY " once thought†" that in this paſſage, the Ebionites were included in the appellation of Heretics: as indeed any one would think, who could explain the grammatical conſtruction of the ſentence; in every clauſe of which *Heretici* [Heretics] is underſtood as the ſubſtantive to be joined with *Alii* [Some]. They, therefore, who maintained that our Lord was literally and naturally Joſeph's ſon, are here expreſsly called " Some Heretics." But Dr. Prieſtley has reconſidered the paſſage; and perceiving how ſtrongly the natural ſenſe of it makes againſt him, he has found himſelf miſtaken in that conſtruction of it. He ſays, " as Cerinthus and Carpocrates, and " other Gnoſtics denied the miraculous conception as " well as the Ebionites, and all the reſt of this de-

* Indocti omnes Hæretici, & ignorantes diſpoſitiones Dei, & inſcii ejus quæ eſt ſecundum hominem diſpenſationis, quippe cæcutientes circa veritatem, ipſi ſuæ contradicunt ſaluti, alii quidem alterum introducentes, præter Demiurgum, patrem. Alii autem ab angelis quibuſdam dicentes factum eſſe mundum, & ſubſtantiam ejus. Alii quidem porro et longe ſeparatum ab eo, qui eſt ſecundum ipſos, patre, a ſemetipſâ floruiſſe, et eſſe ex ſe natam. Alii autem in his quæ continentur a patre, de labe & ignorantiâ ſubſtantiam habuiſſe. Alii autem manifeſtum adventum domini contemnunt, incarnationem eius non recipientes. Alii autem rurſus ignorantes virginis diſpenſationem, ex Joſeph dicunt eum generatum, Lib. 5 Cap. XIX.

† Second Letters, p. 57.

" ſcription,

" ſcription, both before and after this circumſtance, " evidently belongs to the Gnoſtics only, and as in " no other place whatever does he comprehend them " in his definition of hereſy, it is natural to conclude " that he had no view to the Ebionites even here, " but only to thoſe Gnoſtics who in common with " them denied the miraculous conception *." This concluſion might indeed be ſomewhat more natural than it is, if the paſſage really were, what Dr. Prieſtley, when he calls it " this deſcription," would repreſent it to be, a deſcription of one ſect by various characters. For in that caſe it might be ſaid, that all the parts of the deſcription muſt be united to make up the compleat character of an Heretic. But the paſſage is plainly an enumeration of different ſects, to which the name of Heretics, and the charge of ignorance and blindneſs, belong in common; an enumeration, deſcribing each by its particular error. This appears, not only from the grammatical ſtructure of the period, in which the repetition of *Alii*, *Alii*, *Alii*, &c. *Some*, *Some*, *Some*, diſtinguiſhes and enumerates, and hath no other force; but ſtill more evidently from this circumſtance: that the opinions mentioned in the different clauſes are, in ſome inſtances, manifeſtly repugnant; inſomuch that they could not all be maintained by the ſame perſons. Thus the ſecond, third, and fourth clauſes mention contradictory opinions about the origin of the viſible world: and the " ſome Heretics" who held any one of theſe opinions, muſt have been a different ſet

* Second Letters, p. 58.

Dis. III. from the "some Heretics" who held another. And indeed that they were different, is clearly expressed in the Latin words. For I have been favourable to Dr. Priestley in rendering the repeated *Alii*, *Some*, and *Some* and *Some*. The proper rendering would be, *Some*, *Others*, *Others*, &c. In this enumeration of heresies, the error ascribed to each, is alleged as an instance of the ignorance of that sect, of their blindness to the truth, and their opposition to their own salvation. The enumeration being made in proof of that general charge, it is natural to suppose, that each sect is described by that error, which, of all their absurd opinions, was the fittest for the purpose of that proof; the clearest instance of their ignorance and blindness, and their contradicting of their own salvation. The particular error, therefore, mentioned in each clause, is not indeed, by itself, a definition of heresy, but, it is by itself, a sure mark of a Heretic; by which, every one maintaining that opinion, might be known to come under that general character. One of these marks of a Heretic is the opinion, that our Lord was literally and naturally the son of Joseph. All therefore were Heretics, in the judgement of Irenæus, upon whom that mark was to be found, whether they were Cerinthians, Carpocratians, or Ebionites. If this was a mark that might, in the judgement of Irenæus, convict a Carpocratian or Cerinthian; why should it not equally, in his judgement, convict the Ebionites? Because in the Cerinthians and Carpocratians, Dr. Priestley will say, this opinion was blended with impieties, which were indeed Heretical.

tical. But this is to place the mark of the hereſy, in the judgement of Irenæus, not in the circumſtance which he expreſsly mentions as the mark, but in others which he ſuppreſſes. A mode of interpretation, by which every writer may be brought to ſay whatever his expoſitor ſhall be pleaſed to ſay for him. Dis. III.

" If there be any other paſſage in Irenæus, in " in which he calls, or ſeems to call the Ebionites " Heretics*," Dr. Prieſtley declares he hath overlooked it. He hath then overlooked a very remarkable paſſage in the third book, the mention of which I have reſerved for this place. Irenæus, ſpeaking of the univerſal credit and authority of the Goſpels, ſays, that " even Heretics bear witneſs to it, ſince each of them " endeavours to confirm his own doctrines by proofs " from thoſe writings. For the Ebionites, uſing only " the goſpel according to St. Matthew, are by that " convicted of error in their notions of our Lord. " Marcion, cutting off much of the Goſpel accord- " ing to St. Luke, may be proved a blaſphemer " againſt the only God, from the parts which he re- " tains, &c †".

* Second Letters, p. 58.

† Tanta eſt autem circa Evangelia hæc firmitas, ut et ipſi hæretici teſtimonium reddant eis, et ex ipſis egrediens unus quiſque eorum conetur ſuam confirmare doctrinam. Ebionæi etenim, eo evangelio quod eſt ſecundum Matthæum ſolo utentes, ex illo ipſo convincuntur non recte præſumentes de Domino. Marcion autem id quod eſt ſecundum Lucam circumcidens, ex his quæ adhuc ſervantur penes eum, blaſphemus in ſolum exiſtentem Deum oſtenditur. Lib. 3. cap. xi.

Dis. III. As Dr. Prieſtley mentions a definition of hereſy given by Irenæus, in terms which exclude, or at leaſt, comprehend not the Ebionites *, I ſhall juſt take the liberty to ſuggeſt, that he might confer an obligation upon the learned world, if he would be pleaſed to give information, in what part of the whole work of Irenæus that definition may be found.

MEAN while it appears that the Ebionites are repeatedly mentioned by Irenæus, and never mentioned but as Heretics. When any heavy charge againſt Heretics is to be confirmed by particular inſtances, the Ebionites ſeldom are forgotten. In the firſt book, they appear in a liſt of Heretical ſects, as one inſtance among many confirming the author's general aſſertion, that all the Heretical ſects, of his own and the preceding age, had their root and origin in the doctrines of Simon Magus. In the third book, they are mentioned as one inſtance of Heretics, who, rejecting the greater part of the four Goſpels, contribute to the general evidence of the authenticity and credit of thoſe writings, by their ſolicitude to build their particular opinions upon the parts which they receive, and yet are convicted of error in thoſe opinions, by thoſe very parts to which they appeal. In another paſſage of the third book, they are deſcribed as perſons in a ſtate of impenitence and hardened infidelity, lying under the dreadful ſentence of eternal damnation. In the fourth book, their ſect is mentioned among thoſe, whom the Spiritual Diſciple, i. e. the ſound believer, will judge.

* Second Letters, p. 58.

In

In the fifth book, they are mentioned among Here- Dis. III.
tics, whoſe doctrines are demoliſhed all in the lump, and at one blow, by being contraſted with the ſcheme of man's redemption truly ſtated. And in another paſſage of the ſame book, their diſtinguiſhing tenet of the meer humanity of our Lord is alleged as an inſtance of the ignorance and blindneſs of Heretics, and of the forwardneſs of ſuch perſons to oppoſe their own ſalvation.

Of the truth of that remark of Dr. Prieſtley's, which provoked this long diſquiſition, that the Ebionites in Irenæus's large work "are again and again cha- "racterized by him in ſuch a manner as makes it evi- "dent that even he did not conſider them as Heretics, "and that he never calls them by that name;" of the truth of this remark, and of the qualifications of the man who could make it, and take credit to himſelf that he had been the firſt to make it, to enlighten the age upon points of eccleſiaſtical antiquity, let the intelligent reader now form his own judgement

DISQUISITION FOURTH.

Of the ſentiments of the Fathers, and others, concerning the eternal origination of the Son in the neceſſary energies of the paternal intellect.

Dis. IV.

IN a ſubject ſo far above the comprehenſion of the human mind, as the doctrine of the Trinity muſt be confeſſed to be in all its branches, extream caution ſhould be uſed to keep the doctrine itſelf, as it is delivered in God's word, diſtinct from every thing that hath been deviſed by man, or that may even occur to a man's own thoughts, to illuſtrate it, or explain its difficulties. Every one, who hath ever thought for any length of time upon the ſubject, cannot but fall inſenſibly and involuntarily upon ſome way or other of repreſenting the thing to his own mind. And if a man be ever ſo much upon his guard to check the licentiouſneſs of imagination, and bridle an irreverent curioſity upon this holy ſubject, yet if he read what others have written, Orthodox or Heretics, he will find opinions propoſed with too much freedom upon the difficulties of the ſubject; and among different opinions, he cannot but form ſome judgement of the different degrees of probability with which they are ſeverally accompanied; nor can he ſo far command himſelf, as not in ſome meaſure to embrace the opinion, which ſeems the moſt probable. In this manner,

manner, every one, who meddles at all with the subject, will be apt to form a ſolution for himſelf of what ſeem to him the principal difficulties. But ſince it muſt be confeſſed, that the human mind in theſe enquiries is groping in the dark, every ſtep that ſhe ventures to advance beyond the point, to which the clear light of revelation reaches; the probability is, that all theſe private ſolutions are in different ways, and in different degrees, but all, in ſome way and in ſome degree, erroneous: and it will rarely happen, that the ſolution invented by one man will ſuit the conceptions of another. It were, therefore, to be wiſhed, that in treating this myſterious ſubject, men would not, in their zeal to illuſtrate what, after their utmoſt efforts, muſt remain in ſome parts incomprehenſible, be too forward to mix their private opinions with the public doctrine. Many curious queſtions were moved by the Heretics of antiquity, and are now revived by Dr. Prieſtley, about the nature and the limit of the divine generation. Why the Father generates but one Son? Why that Son generates not another? Why the generation is not infinite? Inſtead of anſwering ſuch queſtions, it ſeems to me, that except when the neceſſity may ariſe, as indeed it too often will, of "anſwering a fool according to his folly," it ſhould be a point of conſcience with every writer to keep any particular opinions, he may have formed, as much as poſſible out of ſight; that Divine Truth may not be debaſed with a mixture of the alloy of human error, and that controverſies may not be raiſed upon points in which no man, or ſet of men, can be authorized or qualified to preſcribe to the belief of others. Upon

Dis. IV. Upon theſe principles, I ſhould wiſh to decline all diſpute upon the metaphyſical difficulties of the ſubject, even with an adverſary better qualified, than I take Dr. Prieſtley to be, for ſuch diſcuſſions. I ſhould think indeed that I had already been guilty of an indiſcretion, in the avowal that I have made in my Charge* of my own opinion about the manner, in which the Son's eternal exiſtence, without any diminution of its own neceſſity, may be connected with the Father's; were it not, that what I am there attempting to illuſtrate is not ſo much the ſcripture doctrine itſelf, as the manner in which that doctrine was underſtood by the platonizing fathers.

I SAID, and I ſtill ſay, that it was their common principle "that the exiſtence of the Son flows neceſ-"ſarily from the Divine Intellect exerted on itſelf†." I ſhewed how the Son's eternity will follow from this principle. And I diſcovered, what indeed I might have concealed, that I myſelf concur in this principle with the Platoniſts: for I ſaid, that "it ſeems to "me, to be founded in Scripture‡." By which I meant not to aſſert that it is ſo expreſsly declared in Scripture, that I would undertake to prove it by the Scriptures, to others; in the ſame manner, that I would undertake to prove that the world was created by Jeſus Chriſt: or that the one like the other ought to be made a branch of the public confeſſion of the Church; or that the belief, or diſbelief of this particular principle is a circumſtance that may, in the leaſt,

* IV. § 5. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

affect

affect the integrity of any Christian's faith. It was not alleged as a principle, on which I meant at all to rest the credit of the Scripture doctrine; it was mentioned only as a principle, which, true or false, was embraced by a certain set of writers, and serves to explain certain things said by them, which without it are unintelligible, or at least, liable to misinterpretation. At the same time, I discovered my own opinion about this principle, that I think it true, or likely to be true; for it *seems* (that is the word I used) to be founded in Scripture. Many phrases of Holy writ seem to me to allude to it: and to those, who first thought of it, I doubt not but that the same allusions seemed couched in the same phrases. Yet I will not undertake to teach every one to read the same sense in the same expressions. When I shewed, that from this principle once admitted, a strict demonstration might be drawn of the eternity of the second person; it was not that I set any value upon that demonstration, as adding in the least degree to the certainty of the Scripture doctrine. Upon such points, the evidence of Holy Scripture is, indeed, the only thing that amounts to proof. The utmost that reasoning can do, is to lead to the discovery, and, by God's grace, to the humble acknowledgement of the weakness and insufficiency of reason; to resist her encroachments upon the province of faith; to silence her objections, and cast down imaginations, and prevent the innovations and refinements of philosophy and vain deceit. Had philosophical reasoning upon points of express revelation been held as cheap by Dr. Priestley, as it is by me, the present controversy never had arisen. Dis. IV.

Dis. IV.

ſen. But this demonſtration of the Son's eternity, was produced for no other purpoſe, but to ſhew the diſagreement between the immediate conſequences of the principle, from which it was deduced, and certain notions which Dr. Prieſtley would aſcribe to thoſe who held that principle. But Dr. Prieſtley, miſtaking for an illuſtration of Scripture, what is only an illuſtration of writers, whoſe meaning had been perverted by him; conceiving that the whole Catholic doctrine of the Trinity would be confuted, if a certain principle, which being admitted might furniſh a demonſtrative proof of a particular part of it, might be ſhewn to be without foundation; calls upon me in the Seventh of his Firſt Letters *, to "ſhew what it is in "the Scriptures, or indeed in the Fathers, that gives "any countenance to that curious piece of reaſoning." In another part of the ſame letter, he tells me that "in reading my attempt to explain the doctrine of "the Trinity [ſo he calls it], he fancies himſelf got "back to the darkeſt of the dark ages, or at leaſt, "that he is reading Peter Lombard, Thomas Aqui-"nas, or Duns Scotus †." In his Second Letters, waxing confident by my neglect, which he interpreted as a cowardly deſertion of my argument, he is louder in his challenge, and more ſtout in his defiance. Upon every occaſion of theſe *challenges* and *calls*, of which ſometimes the Dean of Canterbury, ſometimes Dr. White, ſometimes Biſhop Prettyman, ſometimes I myſelf have the honour to be the object,

* Firſt Letters, p. 78.

† Firſt Letters, p. 99.

upon

upon every ſuch occaſion, but particularly on this, his tone reminds me of the ſtrutting actor on the ſtage;

Clifford of Cumberland, 'tis Warwick calls.
And if thou doſt not hide thee from the bear,
Now, when the angry trumpet ſounds alarum,
Clifford, I ſay, come forth and fight with me.
Proud Northern Lord ——————
Warwick is hoarſe with calling thee to arms.

"I CHALLENGE him, he ſays, to produce any "authority whatever, antient or modern, for that "opinion of the origin of the Son from the Father's "contemplation of his own perfections*." In another place he ſpeaks of it as "my own peculiar no-"tion." He expreſſes "great mortification," that in my Letters in Reply to his Firſt Letters, "he found "not one gleam of more light on this curious ſub-"ject †." He reminds me of his moſt magnanimous "CHALLENGE to produce any authority for it, ex-"cept what may exiſt in my own imagination ‡." He makes no doubt but that, had it been poſſible for me to give an anſwer, I ſhould have anſwered ‖.

As for the queſtion about the opinion itſelf, how far it may be reaſonable or unreaſonable, how far the alluſion to it may be real or imaginary, which I think I perceive in ſome ſcriptural phraſes, no challenge of

* Second Letters, p. xxxiv.
† Second Letters, p. 135
‡ Ibid. ‖ P. 134.

Dr.

Dis. IV. Dr. Prieſtley's, no call, taunt, defiance, inſult, will move me from my vow of ſilence. But upon the queſtion of fact, concerning my own excluſive property in whatever there may be of truth or falſehood in the notion, I think myſelf more at liberty, and feel more ſtomach for the conteſt. I cannot indeed reſiſt the temptation, which Dr. Prieſtley's challenge "to "produce any authority whatever, antient or mo- "dern," preſents, to ſeize the occaſion of ſtrengthening the proof of my *main point*, by exhibiting in its true light an inſtance, which, more perhaps, than any other ſingly taken, evinces Dr. Prieſtley's ignorance of the religious opinions of every age, and ſhews how much the oldeſt things to him are novelties.

THE Fathers, it muſt be confeſſed, were in geneneral very properly reſerved and ſhy, when they were directly preſſed with queſtions about the manner in which the exiſtence of the three Divine Perſons is connected. At the ſame time the analogy, which the platonizing Fathers in particular ſuppoſe between the relation of the Father to his Word, and the relation of every man's mind to its own thoughts, ſo neceſſarily implies this principle concerning the Son's origination, that with this principle as a key what they ſay upon the ſubject is very intelligible; and without this key, impenetrably obſcure. Inſomuch that to me it is matter of aſtoniſhment, that any one can read ſome of the paſſages which Dr. Prieſtley himſelf hath produced from Athenagoras, Tatian, Tertullian, and others, and not perceive that this notion was

was common to all thoſe writers, and is the principle upon which all they have ſaid upon the ſubject reſts. But if the ſentiments of the Fathers upon this abſtruſe point, were not to be collected with certainty from the tenor of their reaſoning, and from their language, St. Baſil and St. Cyril are ſufficiently explicit: St. Baſil, when he ſays, that the ſon of God is called the Λογος, " to ſhew that he came forth from intellect *." Which he endeavours to illuſtrate by the example, ſo generally in uſe among the writers of antiquity, of the Human Mind producing an image of itſelf in its own thoughts: St. Cyril, when he ſays, that " if any one " would inveſtigate the manner of that generation, " he ought to conſider the fructifications of Intel- " lect, and to endeavour rather to compare with " them [than with phyſical propagations] the gene- " ration of the Word; and not to ſay that God is " leſs capable of generating than body, becauſe he " generates not in a corporeal way. That the human " intellect generates good thoughts, muſt neceſſarily " be confeſſed. If it be impious to ſuppoſe, that the " human intellect is unfruitful, how much more ab- " ſurd to think, that the ſupreme intellect ſhould be " unproductive, and to deprive it of its proper fruc- " tification †." In theſe words, St. Cyril evidently places Dis. IV

* Διατι Λόγος; ἱνα δειχθη, ὁτι ἐκ τȣ Νȣ προηλθε. Homil. in verba illa " In Principio erat verbum." Tom. i. p. 506.

† Δια ταυτην ὁιμαι την αἰτιαν χρηναι δειν τȣς ὁσοι την ἐπ αὐτȣ γεννησιν ἐξετἀζειν βȣλονται, τας ἐκ νȣ καρποφοριας

Dis. IV. places the generative faculty (if the expreſſion may be allowed) of the Divine Nature in the neceſſary fecundity of intelligence. In another part of the ſame diſcourſe, he ſays, that it is to be conceived, that "the "Son is in ſuch ſort begotten of the Father, as wiſ-"dom of Intellect*." And again, in another place, he illuſtrates the intimate union of the Father and the Son, by its analogy to the union between the human intellect and its internal operations †.

FROM the Fathers if we paſs to the Schoolmen, we ſhall find among them in this, as in moſt ſubjects, more philoſophical ſubtlety and much leſs of a laudable reſerve. With them the queſtion was expreſsly agitated, whether the Divine generation was effected by Intellect, or by Will. If by Intellect, there aroſe a ſecond queſtion, from which they had not the modeſty to abſtain; what the object of the Intellect might be; whether the Divine eſſence ſimply, as Scotus maintained, or the totality of the Divine nature,

ζητειν, και ταυλαις μαλλον εξομοιων επειγεθαι τα λογα την γεννησιν· και μη λεγειν σωμαλων αγονωλερον ειναι τον θεον, επει μη ως σωμα γεννα. Γενναν μεν γαρ και τον ανθρωπινον νεν παλλως αν ομολογησαιμεν διαλογισμους αγαθης· —ει τοινυν ασεξες ειπειν τον ανθρωπινον νεν καρπον εκ εχειν ——πως εκ αλοπον τον υπερ παλα νεν ακαρπον ειναι λεγειν, και της προπεμπης αυλω καρποφοριας αποστερειν. Cyril in Theſauro. Tom. v. p. 45, edit. Auberti.

* ——Νοηλεον ελω γεγεννησθαι τον υιον εκ τα παλρος, ως σοφιαν εκ νου. P. 48.

† Ει ὁ ανθρωπινος νες, &c. p. 31.

in

in the eſſence, the perſons, and the works of Creation, which was the notion of Thomas and his followers. And for this unbounded curioſity of ſpeculation, they are juſtly cenſured by Simon Epiſcopius*; whoſe cenſure is a teſtimony, which Dr. Prieſtley, perhaps will regard, that ſuch opinions were maintained, and ſuch queſtions agitated.

After the Council of Trent, this peculiar notion of mine, this ſingular conceit, for which no authority whatever can be produced, antient or modern, became the public doctrine of the Church of Rome, being expreſsly aſſerted in the rule of public teaching, ſet forth by the authority of that council, for the aſſiſtance and direction of the parochial clergy, under the title of *Catechiſmus ad Parochos*. The firſt part of that work is an expoſition of the Apoſtles Creed. In the explanation of the firſt article, the comment upon the word "*patern*," is cloſed with an exhortation to the true believer to pray without intermiſſion, "that being at ſome time or other admitted "into the eternal tabernacles, he may be thought "worthy to be allowed to ſee what that wonderful fe-"cundity of God the Father is, that *contemplating* "*and exerting his intelligence upon himſelf*, he ſhould "beget a Son the exact counterpart and equal of "himſelf†". In the expoſition of the ſecond article,

* Epiſcop. Inſt. Lib. iv. ſect. 11. c. 33.

† Oret ſine intermiſſione—ut aliquando in æterna tabernacula receptus dignus ſit qui videat, quæ tanta ſit Dei Patris fœcunditas, ut *ſeipſum intuens atque intelligens* parem et æqualem ſibi Filium gignat. Artic. Prim. § xiv.

Dis. IV. upon the words "*Filium ejus unicum*," it is ſaid, "That of all ſimilitudes that are uſually brought to "explain the manner and way of the eternal genera- "tion, that ſeems to come the neareſt to the thing, "which is taken from the reflexion of our own mind; "upon which account St. John calls the Son the "Word. For as our mind, exerciſing its intelligence "upon itſelf, forms as it were an image of itſelf, "which Divines have called its word; ſo God, ſo "far as human things may be put in compariſon with "divine, exerciſing intelligence upon himſelf, gene- "rates the eternal Word *."

THIS, however, was not ſo peculiarly the doctrine of the Roman Church, but that it had its advocates among the moſt eminent of the proteſtant Divines. Philip Melancthon, that great luminary of the reformation, was its conſtant and ſtrenuous aſſertor; and he repeatedly reſorts to it as a principle for the explanation of the Phraſeology of Scripture. Philip Melancthon, a man with whom it were more honourable to err, than to be in the right with Socinus or Dr. Prieſtley, thought, as I think, that the notion was

* Ex omnibus autem, quæ ad indicandum modum rationemque æternæ generationis ſimilitudines afferuntur, illa propius ad rem videtur accedere, quæ ab animi noſtri cogitatione ſumitur; quamobrem ſanctus Joanes Filium ejus verbum appellat. Ut enim mens noſtra, ſe ipſum quodam modo intelligens ſui effingit imaginem, quam verbum Theologi diſcerunt; ita Deus, quantum tamen divinis humana conferre poſſunt, *ſeipſum intelligens*, verbum æternum generat. Artic. Secund. § xv.

founded

founded in Holy Writ. He thought it indeed ſo clearly implied in the Scripture phraſes, that he was leſs ſcrupulous, than I would be, in aſſerting it as a part of the Scripture doctrine.

In his Loci Theologici, he ſays, " the Son, there-
" fore, is an image generated by the Father's
" *Thought.*———The eternal Father, *contemplating*
" *himſelf*, begets a thought of himſelf [or a concep-
" tion of himſelf in his own thoughts] which is an
" image of himſelf never vaniſhing away, but ſub-
" ſiſting, the eſſence being communicated to the
" image.————He is called the Word, becauſe
" he is generated by thought. He is called the
" Image, becauſe thought is an image of the thing
" thought upon*."

Let me by the way entreat the learned reader to compare theſe ſentences of Melancthon with Tertullian's fifth chapter againſt Praxeas, and judge for himſelf, whether Tertullian and Melancthon had not the ſame view of the ſubject.

Again in the form of examination of Candidates for holy orders, Melancthon ſays: " The eternal
" Son is the ſecond perſon of the Divinity, which

* Eſt igitur imago cogitatione Patris genita.————Pater æternus *ſeſe intuens* gignit cogitationem ſui, quæ eſt imago ipſius non evaneſcens, ſed ſubſiſtens, communicatâ ipſi eſſentiâ.———Dicitur Λογος, quia cogitatione generatur. Dicitur imago, quia cogitatio eſt imago rei cogitatæ. Op. Melanct. Tom. I. p. 152.

Dis. IV. " perſon is the ſubſtantial and entire image of the eter-
" nal Father, which the Father, *contemplating and*
" *conſidering himſelf*, generates from eternity *."
The ſame thing is repeated nearly in the ſame words, in his definitions of appellations †, and again in his ſecond expoſition of the Nicene Creed ‡.

In his firſt expoſition of the Nicene Creed, he ſays, " The eternal Father is a divine perſon, eternal,
" not ſprung of any other, but *by thought upon him-*
" *ſelf* generating from eternity the coeternal Son, his
" own image.———The Son is a divine perſon be-
" gotten by the Father *thinking upon and contem-*
" *plating himſelf* ‖."

In the ſecond expoſition, he ſays, " To be born is
" of the intelligent power; becauſe the Son is born
" by thought §."

In his annotations upon the Goſpel, for the feaſt of the nativity, he ſays, " Baſil and others, ſay, that
" the Son is called the Word, becauſe he is the

* Filius æternus eſt ſecunda perſona divinitatis, quæ eſt ſubſtantialis et integra imago cæterni Patris, quam Pater *ſeſe intuens et conſiderans* ab æterno gignit. Opera Melancth. Tom. I. p. 307.

† Tom. I. p. 350. ‡ Tom. II. p. 213, and p. 315.

‖ Pater æternus eſt perſona divina, æterna, non nata aliunde, ſed *cogitatione ſui* gignens ab æterno Filium coæternum, imaginem ſuam.——Filius eſt perſona divina genita à Patre cogitante ac intuente ſeipſum. Symb. Nicen. De Tribus perſonis.

§ Naſci eſt â potentiâ intelligente; quia Filius cogitatione naſcitur. Tom. II. p. 228.

" image

" image of the Father, generated by the Father " *thinking upon himſelf.* For the Father, *contemplat-* " *ing himſelf*, generates a thought, which is called " the Word; which thought is the image of the Fa- " ther; into which image the Father, if we may ſo " ſpeak, transfuſes his own eſſence*." Dis. IV.

So poſſeſſed was Melancthon with this notion, which Dr. Prieſtley, learned only in his own imaginations, conceives to have been firſt hatched in my brain, ages ſince the good Melancthon fell aſleep, that upon every occaſion, when he mentions the generation of the Son, he introduces this notion of the manner of it. And Melancthon, the learned reader will obſerve, never dreamed that in this he was ſetting up a notion of his own. He thought, as I do, that the Fathers entertained the ſame view of the ſubject; and that this view of the ſubject was countenanced by the phraſeology of Holy Writ.

ZANCHIUS indeed, an orthodox writer of great piety and learning, ſpeaks of this ſame notion in terms, as it may ſeem, of ſtrong diſapprobation. " What " ſome, he ſays, as the ſchoolmen write, that God " the Father, by ſeeing and conſidering himſelf begot " the Word, and that the emanation of the Son

* Baſilius et alii dicunt, Filium dici Λογον, quia ſit imago Patris, genita à Patre *ſeſe cogitante*. Pater enim *intuens ſe*, gignit cogitationem, quæ vocatur verbum; quæ cogitatio eſt imago Patris, in quam imaginem Pater, ut ita dicamus, transfundit ſuam eſſentiam. Tom. III. p. 12.

Dis. IV. " from the Father, is after the manner of an emana-
" tion of Intellect, and other things of that kind,
" which have no proof from the word of God, we
" muſt reject them as raſh and vain; that is to ſay,
" if the thing be poſitively aſſerted ſo to be *." Zanchius, therefore, were he now living, to be a witneſs of this controverſy between Dr. Prieſtley and me, would have taxed me, it ſeems, with raſhneſs and preſumption, had he found me propounding this notion of the Divine Generation, *as the way in which the thing muſt certainly be.* But he would have little admired my adverſary's learning, or commended his modeſty, when he upbraids me as a ſetter forth of new doctrines of my own coinage, and challenges me to produce any authority, antient or modern, in ſupport of this opinion. Zanchius well knew, though the thing is unknown to Dr. Prieſtley, that the authority of the Schoolmen, and of others, is on the ſide of the opinion. And in the very cenſure, which he paſſes upon the doctrine, he acquits all of his own, or later times, of the invention.

But in truth, this learned Calviniſt ſeems to have thought no worſe of this opinion, than I myſelf think of it: that it is not a thing to be too poſitively aſſerted

* Cæterum quod quidam, ut ſcholaſtici, ſcribunt, Deum patrem ſe videndo et conſiderando genuiſſe Λογον, et quòd emanatio Filii a Patre eſt ſecundum emanationem intellectûs, et alia id genus, quæ nullum habent ex verbo Dei teſtimonium, rejicienda nobis ſunt tanquam temeraria & vana; nempe ſi res ita ſeſe habere aſſeveretur. Zanchius De Tribus Elohim. Lib. v. c. 8.

ſo

so to be. In itself he seems to have thought it not improbable. For in another part of his works, he mentions it as a notion furnishing the best answer to those who would deny the Son's eternity, upon the principles so frequently alleged by the Arians and other Antitrinitarians, that that which is begotten, must always have a later beginning of its existence than that which begets; and that all generation is effected by motion and change. Such objections, he says, may be answered by analogies taken from the material world. The sun at all times generates rays from his own body. These rays are emitted without any change in the sun himself. "But a clearer refutation, "he says, may be drawn from the example of our "own incorporeal intellect.———Intellect, in the "energy of intelligence, generates another *quasi-* "*intellect*, as the philosophers call it, like unto itself; "which, for this reason, is called by us a Conception "of the Mind; by the Platonists, Mind generated of "Mind; and by the Fathers, the Word and Λογος "of the Mind. And this it begetteth within itself. "And there is no such thing as intellect actually in- "telligent, that is, which is truly intellect, without "this other generated intellect; and the parent in- "tellect generates without suffering in itself any "change*." Zanchius suggests these philosophical topics

Dis. IV.

* Clarius etiam hæc refutari possunt exemplo intellectûs nostri incorporei.———Intellectus, dum intelligit, gignit (ut philosophi vocant) alium quasi intellectum, sibi similem, quem hanc ob causam nos conceptum mentis, Platonici mentem genitam a mente, Patres verbum & Λογον mentis appellarunt.

Dis. IV. topics of reply to philoſophical arguments againſt the eternity of God the Son. This analogy, therefore, between the Father's generation of the Son, and the mind's generation of a conception of itſelf in thought, he eſteemed an hypotheſis philoſophically probable; which might be very properly employed to convince thoſe, who upon philoſophical grounds made a difficulty of the only begotten Son's eternity, that what they called in queſtion might eaſily be; though he thought it preſumptuous in any one to aſſert too poſitively, that this analogy repreſents the way in which the thing actually is.

If the Calviniſts have been ſhy of reſorting in their diſputes with Anſitrinitarians, to the arguments, which Zanchius ſuggeſts and recommends; I take the reaſon of this to be, that the analogy, on which thoſe arguments were founded, ſeemed repugnant to an opinion, which Calvin himſelf was thought to hold. Calvin, in the heat of his diſputes with Valentinus Gentilis and Blandratta, was carried to the uſe of ſome unguarded expreſſions, which ſeemed to imply that the exiſtence of the Son was entirely independent of the Father's. He went indeed ſo far as to queſtion the propriety of the expreſſion in the Nicene Creed, "God of God." This notion was conſidered as a dangerous novelty, and gave much alarm to ſome of the moſt eminent Divines of thoſe times, as neceſſa-

larunt. Et illum gignit intra ſe; & nunquam intellectus eſt actu intelligens, & ideo verè intellectus, ſine hoc genito altero intellectu: & quidem ſine ullâ ſui mutatione gignit. Zanchius De Naturâ Dei. Lib. II. c. 7.

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rily terminating in one or the other of two horrible extremes; Sabellianiſm on the one hand, or Tritheiſm on the other. It was treated with great ſeverity by writers of the Roman Church, and was ſtrenuouſly oppoſed, though with much moderation and candour, by my illuſtrious predeceſſor Biſhop Bull among ourſelves, and in Holland by Arminius. Beza, in his preface to Athanaſius's dialogues, makes the apology of Calvin; confeſſing that he had not been ſufficiently circumſpect in the choice of expreſſions, and alleging that his expreſſions had been miſunderſtood; which I take indeed to be the truth. It ſeems to me, that Calvin meant only to deny that the Son was a contingent being, the creature of the Father's will; to aſſert, that he is ſtrictly ſpeaking God; and that the exiſtence of the three perſons, of the ſecond and third, no leſs than of the firſt, is contained in the very notion of a God, when that notion is accurately developed. However, his words were otherwiſe underſtood by many of his followers; his authority gave credit and currency to an error, which was ſuppoſed to be his doctrine, and the notion of the Son's origination in the neceſſary energies of the paternal intellect is rejected by many of the Calviniſts, more peremptorily than by Zanchius. Dis. IV.

The Church of England, with her uſual caution, hath abſtained from giving her ſanction to any particular opinion concerning the manner of the Divine generation. Of her Divines, ſome have embraced the opinion, which I have acknowledged for my own (particularly Dr. Leſlie in his *Socinian controverſy diſcuſſed*)

Dis. IV. *diſcuſſed)* and a great majority acknowledge a dependance of the Son's exiſtence on the Father, ſtrenuouſly aſſerting in the language of the Nicene Creed, that the Son is "God of God." But ſome, of no inconſiderable name, have adopted what was thought to be Calvin's doctrine, in an extent to which I think, with Beza, Calvin himſelf never meant it ſhould be carried.

Upon the whole, I truſt it appears, that this ſingular conceit of mine, this invention for which I am challenged to produce any authority, antient or modern, is a principle that was tacitly aſſumed by many of the Fathers; openly maintained by ſome; diſputed about by the Schoolmen; approved by the Church of Rome; maintained by the greateſt of the Lutheran Divines; objected to by the Calviniſts as a point of doctrine, but received by ſome of the moſt learned of that perſuaſion as at leaſt a probable ſurmiſe. About the truth of the opinion, I have declared that I will not diſpute; and I ſhall keep my word. But Dr. Prieſtley's raſh defiance, I may place among the ſpecimens, with which his hiſtory and his letters to me abound, of his incompetency in this ſubject, and of the effrontery of that incurable ignorance, which is ignorant even of its own want of knowledge.

DIS.

DISQUISITION FIFTH.

Of Origen's want of Veracity.

THE defence of Origen's veracity, which Dr. Prieſtley hath attempted to ſet up in the Second of his Third Letters, is in ſome parts ſo weak, and in others ſo diſingenuous, that it would deſerve no ſerious reply, if the reader might be conſidered as a judge before whom Origen was arraigned, who would be obliged, by his office, to canvaſs the arguments and weigh the evidence on both ſides with a ſcrupulous attention, in order to a ſolemn condemnation or acquittal of the accuſed party. But it may be expected of a controverſial writer to ſave trouble to the reader, who is bound to no ſuch official duty; to aſſiſt him in forming a final judgement upon the evidence produced on either ſide, and to expoſe the futility of arguments and the fallacy of aſſertions, which, in a criminal proceſs before any of his Majeſty's judges of aſſize, might ſafely be truſted to expoſe themſelves. Dis. V.

The work of Celſus againſt Chriſtianity being loſt, neither the plan nor the matter of it is otherwiſe to be known, that by what may be gathered from Origen's anſwer. It appears from Origen, that it was a compoſition of much art, and highly laboured. Many of

Dis. V. of Celsus's objections were delivered in the person of a Jew, who is supposed to address his discourse first to Jesus, and afterwards to the Hebrew Christians. In the discourse addressed to the Hebrew Christians, Celsus makes his Jew upbraid them with a desertion of the Mosaic Law. To this reproach, Origen, in vindication of the Hebrew brethren, gives a double answer; which I have shewn to be inconsistent with itself in the two different branches *. First, he asserts, that the Jews believing in Christ had not renounced their judaism. Upon occasion of this assertion, he goes into a discourse of some length about St. Peter's adherence to the Mosaic Law, and the information, which was conveyed to that Apostle in a vision, concerning the extinction of its authority. From this discourse he runs into a second, upon a saying of our Lord's, which he expounds as an ænigmatical allusion to the intended abrogation of the Law. And when in this digressive way he hath written "about it and about it," till he had himself forgotten, or might reasonably trust that his reader would have forgotten, the position with which this prolix discourse began, he enters upon the second branch of his defence of the Hebrew brethren; in which he flatly contradicts his first assertion, insulting over Celsus's ignorance, who had not made his Jew distinguish the different sects of the converted Hebrews; two, which observed the Law, and one, which had to all intents and purposes abandoned it. I have given this passage at length in

* Remarks on Dr. P's Second Letters. P. 2. Chap. I. § vi.

my

my Remarks on Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters *, and ſhall not tire my reader's patience with a needleſs repetition of it.

Dr. Priestley, to vindicate Origen from the charge of ſelf-contradiction in this inſtance, hath recourſe to a very curious piece of Criticiſm. He bids me obſerve, that Origen contends not that Celſus's Jew, had he ſaid what Origen ſays he ſhould have ſaid, would have ſaid what was *true*, but what was *plauſible* †. The ſame critical ſagacity, that ſtruck out this diſtinction, might have perceived, that the want of plauſibility, with which Celſus's Jew is taxed, conſiſted in the confounding of diſtinctions, which actually exiſted: and that the exiſting diſtinctions, which Celſus's Jew confounded, were the diſtinctions between the Hebrew ſects, two obſerving the Law, and one diſuſing it. For this is the language of Origen's reproach. "How *confuſedly* does Celſus's Jew ſpeak, "when he might have ſaid, &c." and, by ſaying ſo, have avoided the imputation of confuſion.

The plauſibility, of the want of which Origen complains in the diſcourſe of Celſus's Jew, is what may be called poetical plauſibility. It is that general air of truth, which a writer of judgement and good taſte contrives to give to the fable of a drama, by an attention to the peculiarities of times, places, manners, and characters: a neglect of which ſtamps a

* Remarks on Dr. P's Second Letters. P. 2. Chap. I. § 6.

† Third Letters. P. 10.

manifeſt

Dis. V. manifeſt character of clumſy fiction on what ought to ſeem reality. As would be the caſe in any ſerious play, in which the Maid of Orleans ſhould be ſeated on the Delphic tripod or Hugh Peters introduced; maintaining the divine rights of Kings and Biſhops. This is the want of plauſibility, with which Origen taxes Celſus. He ſays, that Celſus, with all his great pretenſions to learning and taſte, knew not the common rules of art about maintaining character in the fiction of perſons. Το ακολουθον και οιδε καιρατον τοπον της προσωποποιας. He made his Jew ſay what no real Jew would have ſaid.—That the Hebrew Chriſtians in general had deſerted the Law of their anceſtors. This no Jew would have ſaid, becauſe it was a downright falſehood; which every Jew muſt have known to be ſuch. Had Origen ſtopt ſhort here, he would not have himſelf betrayed the want of truth in his firſt aſſertion, that the whole body of the Hebrew Chriſtians retained the obſervation of the Law. For the two propoſitions concerning the Hebrew Chriſtians, that they had all forſaken their Law, which was Celſus's Jew's aſſertion, and that none of them had forſaken it, which was Origen's, are ſo compleatly oppoſite, that the entire falſehood of the one were perfectly conſiſtent with the entire truth of the other. But Origen, unfortunately for his own credit, goes on to tell his reader, what Celſus's Jew might have ſaid with more plauſibility, i. e. with more propriety of character—more conſiſtently with a Jew's knowledge of the truth—that is more truly: ſo that plauſibility and truth, in this uſe of the word plauſibility, are the very ſame thing. Had Celſus made his Jew reproach the

the Hebrew Converts, not, as he did, with a general desertion of their law, but with great disagreements among themselves about the extent and duration of its authority, and the respect due to it under the Christian dispensation, he would have made his Jew speak more in character; because he would have spoken more consistently with what every Jew must have known to be the real state of opinions, among the Christians of the circumcision. Had Celsus's Jew talked like a Jew upon this subject, he would not have said that all the Hebrew brethren were deserters of their law; but he might, it seems, with great propriety have said, that some of them had forsaken it. This had been very consistent with that accurate information, which a Jew might be expected to possess. Consequently, it appears, that Origen should not have said, that they all adhered to it. And his own representation of the fact, when he comes to state it accurately, betrays the falsehood of that first assertion. Dis. V.

That the distinctions, which Origen says Celsus's Jew might have put between the Hebrew Christians, were differences really subsisting in that body at the time, is strongly implied in the form of the expression, δυναμενος ειπειν; the force of which is very imperfectly rendered, in my translation of the passage, by the words "when he might have said." It had been better rendered, "when he had it to say." The Greek words δυναμενος ειπειν, like the English "he "had it to say," are applicable only to substantial

Dis. V. facts, which might safely be averred without danger of refutation.

Dr. Priestley indeed seems willing to concede, that Origen, in this second branch of his reply to Celsus's Jew's reproach, "may allude to a few" of the Hebrew Christians, "who had abandoned their antient customs *." So that the question at last comes to this; How many of the Hebrew Christians had abandoned those customs? For that some had abandoned them, is at last confessed. These *some* were by Origen's account now to be reckoned a sect. But Dr. Priestley hath taken care to settle the proportion to the advantage of his own argument. "There "might be, he says, a few Jewish Christians who "had deserted their former customs, which would "have given Celsus a *plausible pretence* for making "such a division of them as to make these one of the "classes; yet the great body of them had not †." But there is nothing in Origen's expressions, which should imply, that either of the two sects of the Hebrew Christians which retained the law, was a greater body than the sect, which had abandoned it. *Some* and *Some* and *Some* is the word, by which the mention of each class is introduced. In what proportion the first "Some" might fall short of, or exceed, the second or the third, it exceeds my skill in computation to investigate. Dr. Priestley, perhaps, solved the problem, in that early period of his life, when he was addicted to mathematical pursuits ‡.

* Third Letters. P. 10.

† Second Letters. P. 191.

‡ Ibid.

But

But I have maintained, that Origen, in the ſentence which follows this diviſion of the Hebrews profeſſing Chriſtianity into three claſſes, gives us to underſtand, that of theſe three ſorts, they only, who had laid aſide the obſervation of the Moſaic Law, were in his time conſidered as true Chriſtians. For he mentions it as a further proof of Celſus's ignorance, that, in his account of the hereſies of the Chriſtian Church, he had omitted *the Iſraelites believing in Jeſus and not laying aſide the law of their anceſtors*. I refer the reader to an exact tranſlation of Origen's words in my Remarks upon Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters *.

Upon this, Dr. Prieſtley ſays to me, in the Firſt of his Third Letters, "From this conſtruction of "the paſſage, a perſon might be led to think that "Origen repreſented Celſus as having undertaken to "give an account of the hereſies in the Chriſtian "Church, and as having in that account omitted "the Iſraelites believing in Chriſt, and not laying "aſide the rites of their anceſtors; and upon no "other ground can your inſinuation ſtand †". On no other ground, I declare, does my inſinuation ſtand. But I am confident, that with the exception of Dr. Prieſtley and his aſſociates and admirers, every perſon, who will take the trouble to conſider the paſſage as it ſtands in Origen's diſcourſe, will perceive, that mine is the plain and natural conſtruction of it. Every unprejudiced perſon, who can conſtruct the

* P. 2. Chap. i. § 7. † Third Letters, p. 13.

Dis. V. paſſage for himſelf, will perceive that Origen hath indeed thus repreſented Celſus; as pretending to give an account of the hereſies among Chriſtians, and in that account inſerting ſome who had not a right to be inſerted, and omitting others who had. Of Celſus's work, as hath been before remarked, we know not the contents, but ſo far as they may be gathered from Origen's reply. It ſhould ſeem from this paſſage in Origen, that Celſus, in ſome part of his work, had found it to his purpoſe to enumerate the principal ſects, of which he would have it believed the general body of the Chriſtians was compoſed. It is not difficult to conceive, how it might be to his purpoſe, to enumerate ſects, and make as many of them as he could. He might intend by this, to throw diſcredit on Chriſtians in general; as diſagreeing among themſelves, and broken into parties, about the particulars of the Revelations which they profeſſed in common to believe. Origen ſays, that in the execution of this deſign, he numbered among the hereſies of the Church impious ſects, which were not to be deemed in any degree Chriſtian, and paſſed unnoticed, or knew not of, the real hereſy of the Judaizing Hebrews. This is in itſelf a very juſt and pertinent objection to Celſus's enumeration. But then it is a confeſſion, that the Judaizing Hebrews were an heretical ſect; and of conſequence that Origen aſſerted what was falſe, when he ſaid of the Hebrew Chriſtians in general, that they Judaized. For that the great body of the Hebrew Chriſtians was deemed heretical, is what, I beleive, no adventurer in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory hath ever yet affirmed.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER inſtance which I produced * of Origen's diſpoſition to prevaricate, is his anſwer to Celſus's Jew's objection to the famous prophecy of the miraculous conception, contained in Iſaiah VII. 14. Celſus's Jew maintains, that the Hebrew word in that text, which the Chriſtians, with the old Greek tranſlators, underſtand to ſignify a virgin, properly renders, not the condition of virginity, but the ſeaſon of youth; not a virgin, but a young woman. Origen, to prove on the contrary that this word properly renders a woman in the ſtate of virginity, cites a text in Deuteronomy, where he would have it believed, that the word in queſtion is clearly uſed in that ſenſe. But according to our modern copies of the Hebrew text, the words, which correſpond to the Greek παρθενος in the two paſſages in Iſaiah and Deuteronomy, are two different words. And there is much reaſon to believe, as I have ſhewn in my Remarks on Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters †, that the ſame two different words occurred in the two paſſages in the copies of Origen's time, and that Origen himſelf was appriſed of the difference. The text in Deuteronomy, therefore, as it ſtands in the modern Hebrew text, and as it probably ſtood in the more antient copies, affords no illuſtration of Iſaiah's words; and Origen's expreſſions give t e greateſt cauſe to ſuſpect, that he well knew the infirmity of hi own argument; and b conſequence that in the uſe of ſuch an argument he was guilty of prevarication.

* Remarks on Dr. P's. Second Letters, p. 2. Chap. i. § 8.

† Ibid.

Dis. V. Dr. PRIESTLEY ſays to me, in the Firſt of his Third Letters, "The queſtion between Origen and "the Jews was, not what was the word in the He-"brew, but what was the meaning of it in a particu-"lar place *". It is true. The main queſtion between Origen and Celſus's Jew was about the meaning of a word in a text. But then the queſtion was not indefinite; about one or another of different words in different places. It was about a particular word, in a particular place. About the meaning of the word עלמה in Iſaiah vii. 14. This was indeed, the queſtion between Origen and Celſus's Jew. But the queſtion between Dr. Prieſtley and me, is, by what ſort of argument Origen attempted to ſuſtain his own opinion upon the matter in debate between him and the Jew? Whether by ſuch an argument as might have been employed by an honeſt diſputant, who had preferred general truth to victory in a particular queſtion. Origen, to juſtify the ſenſe in which he underſtood the word, reſorts to a critical argument. He appeals to a paſſage in Deuteronomy; in which he would have it believed that the word was indiſputably uſed in the ſame ſenſe, in which he underſtood it to be uſed in the text in queſtion in Iſaiah. Now it is evident that this critical argument reſts entirely upon the identity of the word in the two different texts; and Origen's good faith, in the uſe of that argument, reſts on his knowledge or belief of the identity. I remark, that Origen takes not upon him to affirm poſitively this identity of the word, upon which his whole argument

* Third Letters, p. 14.

depends;

depends; but ſpeaks of it as from hearſay only. I remark, that from the preſent ſtate of the Hebrew text, there is great reaſon to think that this hearſay was a falſe report. For in the text in Deuteronomy we find not עלמה but בתולה. Nor did Dr. Kennicott find עלמה in the text cited by Origen from Deuteronomy, in any one of the innumerable copies, which he collated. Now I ſay, that the confeſſed ſenſe of the word בתולה in Deuteronomy can never ſettle the diſputed ſenſe of the word עלמה in Iſaiah. And I ſay, that the doubtful manner, in which Origen ſpeaks of the identity of the two words in Iſaiah and Deuteronomy, creates a vehement ſuſpicion, that the words were different in the copies of his time, as they are in thoſe of the preſent day; and that Origen well knew that his argument was founded on a miſrepreſentation of the text in Deuteronomy *. Dis. V.

Dr. PRIESTLEY adds, "admitting that the diſ-"pute was about the true reading in the original, "what great matter was there in Origen's ſaying, "*the Jews ſaid ſo*, when he knew that what they "ſaid was true †?" Here again we have a beautiful ſpecimen of our Greek profeſſors readineſs in the Greek language. *The Jews ſaid ſo!* Origen ſays nothing of what the Jews ſaid. There is no mention of Jews, more than of Cherokees, except of Celſus's fictitious Jew, in this part of Origen's diſcourſe. The

* Remarks on Dr. P's. Second Letters, p. 2. Chap. i. § 8.

† Third Letters, p. 14.

Dis. V. nominative of the verb φασι is not *the Jews*, but the indefinite plural underſtood; which is uſually expreſſed in the Engliſh language by the pronoun *They* uſed indefinitely, and in the French by *On*; but in the Greek and the Latin languages is always underſtood, never is expreſſed: ὡς φασι, ut aiunt. "As they ſay" i. e. "As it is generally ſaid." Origen affirms not, that what was thus generally ſaid was true. That he ſhould ſhelter himſelf under the authority of a vague report, in a point ſo eſſential to his argument, in which he was ſo competent to judge how the caſe really ſtood, is a ſtrong preſumption that he knew, not that this report was true, but that it was the reverſe of truth. That it was the reverſe of truth, is in the higheſt degree probable from the preſent ſtate of the Hebrew text. That Origen knew it to be the reverſe, is highly probable, from the ſuſpicious manner in which he appeals to it. And upon the ground of this ſtrong preſumptive evidence, my impeachment of his veracity, in this inſtance, ſtands.

Dr. Priestley, in relating my remark upon Origen's critical argument, hath taken care to omit that very material part of it, that in our modern copies of the Hebrew Bible, the word, which, by the conſent of all interpreters, denotes a virgin in the text cited from Deuteronomy, is a different word from that which the 70 with great propriety render a virgin in Iſaiah. This art, which Dr. Prieſtley is ſo apt to employ, of reducing an argument, which he would refute, by well-managed abridgements, to a form in which it may be capable of refutation, indicates

cates ſo near a reſemblance between the characters of Origen and his *Hyperaſpiſtes*, in the worſt part of Origen's, that perhaps I might not be altogether unjuſtifiable were I to apply to the Squire, the words which Moſheim ſo freely uſes of the Knight, EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAMSI JURATO, QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON CREDITURUM ESSE CONFIRMO. Dis. V.

DIS-

DISQUISITION SIXTH.

Of St. Jerome's orthodox Hebrew Chriſtians.

DIS. VI. IN the Fourth of his Third Letters, Dr. Prieſtley profeſſes to conſider *the evidence from Jerome in favour of the exiſtence of a church of orthodox Jewiſh Chriſtians at Jeruſalem after the time of Adrian* *. The learned reader will be pleaſed to recollect, that my proof of the exiſtence of ſuch a church reſts in part only upon St. Jerome's evidence. The entire proof reſts upon ſeven poſitions laid down by me in my Remarks upon Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, p. 2. chap. ii. and St. Jerome's evidence goes barely to the proof of the laſt of thoſe poſitions, the ſeventh: Namely, "that a body of orthodox Chriſtians of the "Hebrews was actually exiſting in the world much "later than in the time of Adrian †." St. Jerome's evidence is brought for the proof of this poſition ſingly; and this, proved by St. Jerome's evidence, in conjunction with ſix other principles, previouſly laid down, in the proof of which St. Jerome is not at all concerned, makes the whole evidence of the main fact, which I affirm, that a church of orthodox Chriſ-

* See the title of the Fourth Letter. Third Letters, p. 25.

† Remarks, &c. p. 373.

tians

tians of the Hebrews exiſted at Ælia from the final diſperſion of the Jews by Adrian to a much later period *. Dis. VI.

Dr. PRIESTLEY tells me, that " before I can " ſhew that the paſſage in Jerome, on which I lay " ſo great a ſtreſs, is at all to my purpoſe, I muſt " prove the three following things. Firſt, that the " Hebrews believing in Chriſt were different from " the Nazarenes: Secondly, that the former were " compleatly orthodox: and Thirdly, that thoſe or- " thodox Jewiſh Chriſtians reſided at Jeruſalem †."

CERTAINLY it muſt be an argument of little ſignificance, that cannot be applied to the matter in queſtion, till the thing to be proved by it hath been previouſly proved from other principles. Dr. Prieſtley hath confeſſed, that he ſometimes condeſcends to amuſe himſelf with the fabrication of ſuch arguments ‡. But I would not willingly be detected in the uſe of them. I contend that the paſſage in St. Jerome's commentary on Iſaiah, to which I refer in my Remarks on Dr. Prieſtley's Second Letters, [Part 2. Chap. ii. § 8.] which Dr. Prieſtley hath given at length in the Fourth of his Third Letters ‖; I contend, that this paſſage itſelf contains a clear proof, that the perſons there mentioned, under the deſcription of " Hebrews believing in Chriſt", and under the name of " Nazarenes," were different perſons. I

* Remarks, &c. P. II. C. II. † Third Letters, p. 28.
‡ Firſt Letters, p. 130. and ſee my Letters in Reply, Letter ix. ‖ Third Letters, p. 28.

contend

Dis. VI. contend that this ſame paſſage affords a ſtrong ſumptive argument, that the former were compleatly orthodox. The exiſtence of theſe orthodox Hebrew believers in the time of St. Jerome, being thus proved by St. Jerome's evidence, the probability of the fact that they reſided at Ælia, and that ſuch a body had been ſettled at Ælia from the time of Adrian downwards, reſts upon my ſix former poſitions.

St. Jerome relates, as I have obſerved, [Remarks, Part 2. Chap. ii. § 8.] two different expoſitions of the prophecy delivered by Iſaiah, in the beginning of the ninth chapter, concerning Zabulon and Naphtali. The firſt of theſe expoſitions he aſcribes to "the Hebrews believing in Chriſt," the other, to "the Nazarenes, *whoſe opinion he had* "*given above.*" Dr. Prieſtley thinks, that by theſe Nazarenes, St. Jerome "did not intend any other "than the Hebrews believing in Chriſt, but only "meant to vary his mode of expreſſion *." This might ſeem probable, if the difference of name were the only note of difference between the people; and if the Nazarenes had not been mentioned before by their proper name, and a particular opinion mentioned as peculiar to the perſons ſo named. But to ſuppoſe that, under all theſe circumſtances, St. Jerome hath deſcribed the ſame people under different names, meerly for the ſake of varying his mode of expreſſion; is to ſuppoſe, that he hath varied his expreſſion, when it ought leaſt of all to have been varied; and when a

* Third Letters, p. 29.

variation

variation could ſerve no purpoſe, but to create confuſion. An imputation, to which St. Jerome is too good a writer to be liable. The Nazarenes are twice mentioned by St. Jerome under their proper name, in his commentary on the next preceeding chapter of Iſaiah's prophecies: the eighth. Upon the paſſage—*in lapidem autem offenſionis et petram ſcandali duabus domibus Iſrael.*—St. Jerome remarks, that "the Nazarenes, who ſo receive Chriſt that they diſcard "not the rites of the antient law, interpret theſe two "houſes of the two ſchools of Sammai and Hillel; "from which ſprang the Scribes and Phariſees,—and "that theſe are the two houſes that received not the "Saviour, &c." Again upon the paſſage at the concluſion of the ſame chapter,—*cum dixerint ad vos quærite a Pythonibus*,—he remarks, that the Nazarenes expound this paſſage alſo to the diſadvantage of the Scribes and Phariſees. The perſons, whom he mentions under the ſame name in his commentary upon the ninth chapter, put, as he affirms, a ſimilar ſenſe upon the firſt verſes of that: expounding the darkneſs and ſhadow of death, which overſpread the land of Zabulon and Naphtali, of the load of phareſaical ceremonies, from which they were delivered by the goſpel. Certainly theſe perſons, mentioned by the ſame name, as expounding paſſages ſo near to each other, in the 8th and 9th chapters of Iſaiah, ſo much to the ſame purpoſe, were the ſame perſons: and when St. Jerome, in his commentary on the ninth chapter mentions "the Nazarenes, *whoſe opi-* "*nion he had given above*," he refers to that opinion

Dis. VI.

of

Dis. VI. of the Nazarenes, which he had actually related juſt above, in his commentary on the eighth chapter. But "the Hebrews believing in Chriſt," gave, according to St. Jerome, an expoſition of this prophecy concerning the land of Zabulon and Naphtali, very different from that, which is aſcribed by him to the Nazarenes. They imagined that the prophet, in the miſeries which he deſcribes of thoſe northern provinces, alluded to the miſeries of the captivity, which they were the firſt to undergo; as, in compenſation, they were the firſt who enjoyed the light of our Lord's own preaching. What ſimilitude can Dr. Prieſtley find between theſe two expoſitions? What connection between the miſeries of the captivity, and the load of phariſaical ceremonies? To ſay, as Dr. Prieſtley ſays, that the Nazaræan expoſition was only "a farther "illuſtration *" of this of the Hebrew Chriſtians, is as if any one ſhould ſay, that Dr. Prieſtley's expoſition of the beginning of St. John's goſpel is only an illuſtration of mine.

HERE then two different expoſitions of one and the ſame prophetic text are aſcribed to expoſitors, deſcribed under two different names. The neceſſary inference is, that theſe expoſitors, differing in their names and in their ſentiments, were different perſons: or to ſpeak more accurately, ſince they are names of bodies, by which they are ſeverally deſcribed, two different ſects. This is St. Jerome's evidence, that the Hebrews believing in Chriſt were different people from the Nazarenes.

* Third Letters, p. 29.

DR.

Dr. Priestley thinks it a presumptive argument, that these Hebrew Christians were the same with the Nazarenes, and indeed with the Ebionites, that St. Jerome introduces their interpretation of the prophecy "after giving a translation of the passage "by Aquila and Symmachus, both Ebionites *." Due regard being paid to this circumstance, Dr. Priestley thinks this passage of St. Jerome "furnishes "an argument that in the idea of Jerom," these Hebrews "were the very same people" with the Nazarenes; "if it does not also prove, that their opi- "nions were the same with those of Aquila and Sym- "machus, or of the Ebionites †." Dis. VI.

The fact, however, is, that these Hebrew Christians, as it should seem from their exposition of the prophecy, in this passage at least, followed not the translation either of Aquila or Symmachus; so far as we know what their translations of this passage were, from the information which St. Jerome hath given. The Hebrew Christians took the word גליל to be the proper name of the region of Galilee; whereas both Aquila and Symmachus, as St. Jerome tells us, took it for an appellative. And this circumstance, their different interpretations of that single word, with Symmachus's interpretation of another single word in the first verse, is all that St. Jerome hath "given" us, of the translations of this passage by Aquila and Symmachus; though Dr. Priestley hath thought proper to speak, as if St. Jerome in his commentary had

* Ibid. † Ibid.

given

Dis. VI. given their entire tranſlations of the prophecy, and would lead his readers to believe that the expoſition of the Hebrew Chriſtians was founded on thoſe tranſlations.

THE probable argument that the Hebrew Chriſtians were orthodox, is this: that the character given of them by an orthodox writer, is ſimply this, "that "they believed in Chriſt;" without any thing to diſtinguiſh their belief from the common belief of the church, without any note of its error or imperfection. This argument acquires great weight from the well-known temper of St. Jerome and his times*.

Dr. PRIESTLEY thinks it "remarkable; that "having before maintained, that thoſe, whom Jerom "called Chriſtians, in his epiſtle to Auſtin, were or-"thodox, I ſhould now allow, that by the ſame term "he here means heretics; and that the phraſe *be-*"*lieving in Chriſt*, ſhould now be a character of "complete orthodoxy, when in that epiſtle it is pre-"dicated of the heretical Ebionites†." I never maintained that the Nazarenes, mentioned by St. Jerome in his epiſtle to St. Auſtin, were orthodox Chriſtians. I maintained the contrary‡. I only maintain, that upon the particular article of our Lord's divinity, they were certainly orthodox; and ſo far as we know, in moſt other articles of their creed. But by their bigotted attachment to the law, they were

* Remarks, &c. Part 2. Chap. ii. § 8.

† Third Letters, p. 26. ‡ Charge i. § 12.

heretics.

heretics. I have given my reaſons *, why I think the Nazarenes mentioned here a different ſet of people from the Nazarenes mentioned in the epiſtle to St. Auſtin; and ſtill leſs, if at all, heretical. Of the Ebionites, the belief in Chriſt is not predicated in that epiſtle, ſimply, as here of the Hebrews; without any thing to diſtinguiſh their belief from the common belief of the church, without any note of its error or imperfection. St. Jerome, when he ſpeaks of the belief of the Ebionites, marks and reprobates their miſbelief in the diſtincteſt and ſevereſt terms. At this day, the word *believer*, in its common acceptation, ſignifies a ſound Chriſtian. But, with certain additions to qualify and reſtrain its meaning, I, uncharitable and intolerant as I am, might apply it even to Dr. Prieſtley. But it would hardly be underſtood that by ſuch an application of it, I could mean to allow, that Dr. Prieſtley is a believer in the full ſenſe of the word. It would certainly be in very different ſenſes, that I ſhould apply this ſame word to Dr. Prieſtley, and to the Dean of Canterbury, Profeſſor White, or Mr. Parkhurſt. Dis. VI.

If there be any thing in Dr. Prieſtley's Letters, which I receive with particular complacency, it is the kind concern, which he ſometimes diſcovers, leſt in my heedleſs zeal to oppoſe his opinions, I ſhould ſuffer my own foot to ſlip from the ſtrait line of orthodoxy. In reply to my reaſoning for the orthodoxy of one branch at leaſt of the Nazarenes, from

* Remarks, &c. Part 2. Chap. iii. § 1.

Dis. VI. the expoſition aſcribed to them by St. Jerome of Iſ. viii. 13, 14*, by which it clearly appears, that they thought the Saviour of the world deſigned in that paſſage by the title of יהוה צבאות, he tells me, that "he wonders that this mode of interpreting "ſcripture, ſhould not ſtagger even myſelf. *He* "thought that the moſt orthodox, of the preſent day, "had believed that the perſon characteriſed by the "title of the Lord of hoſts had been not the "Son, but the Father †." So he may have thought. That he hath ſo thought, only proves that he is as little acquainted with the orthodoxy of the preſent, as of paſt days. The orthodox of the preſent day well know, that the Son, no leſs than the Father, is often characteriſed in the Old Teſtament, by the word Jehovah put abſolutely. They hold it one irrefragable argument of the Son's divinity, that the writers of the New Teſtament uſually mention Chriſt by the title of Κυριος "the Lord;" which is the word that throughout the Old Teſtament, in the Greek verſion of the 70, is uſed as equivalent to the Hebrew Jehovah. Him whom the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts called Κυριος, writing in the Greek, they muſt have called יהוה (Jehovah) had they written in the Hebrew language. The orthodox of the preſent day believe, becauſe they know St. John believed it, that Chriſt Jeſus is the JEHOVAH, whom the prophet Iſaiah ſaw upon his throne the year that King Uzziah died; whoſe praiſes were the theme of the Seraphic Song, whoſe glory filled the temple.

* Remarks, &c. Part 2. Chap. iii. § 7.

† Third Letters, p. 34.

THE

THE disturbed foundations of the church of Ælia are again settled. I could wish to trust them to their own solidity to withstand any future attacks. I could wish to take my final leave of this unpleasing task, of hunting an uninformed uncandid adversary through the mazes of his blunders, and the subterfuges of his sophistry. But I have found by the experience of this conflict, that a person once engaging in controversy, is not entirely at liberty to choose for himself to what length he will carry the dispute, and when he will desist. I perceive, that I was guilty of an indiscretion in discovering an early aversion to the continuance of the contest. My adversary, perhaps, would have been less hardy in assertion, and more circumspect in argument, had I not given him reason to expect, that every assertion would pass uncontradicted, and every argument uncanvassed. Unambitious, therefore, as I still remain of the honour of the last word, be it however understood that if Dr. Priestley should think proper to make any further defence, or any new attack, I am not pledged either to reply or to be silent.

FINIS.